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By Agnes Repplier

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AMERICANS AND OTHERS.

A HAPPY HALF-CENTURY AND OTHER ESSAYS.

IN OUR CONVENT DAYS

COMPROMISES.

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POINTS OF VIEW

ESSAYS IN IDLENESS.

IN THE DOZY HOURS, AND OTHER PAPERS.

ESSAYS IN MINIATURE.

A BOOK OF FAMOUS VERSE. Selected by Agnes Repplier. In Riverside Library for Young People.

THE SAME. *Holiday Edition.*

VARIA.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

VARIA

By AGNES REPPLIER, Litt. D.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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"Little Pharisees in Fiction" is reprinted by permission of the publishers from "Scribner's Magazine," and "From the Reader's Standpoint" from "The North American Review" (where it was called "The Contentiousness of Modern Novel Writers").

VARIA.

THE ETERNAL FEMININE.

THERE are few things more wearisome in a fairly fatiguing life than the monotonous repetition of a phrase which catches and holds the public fancy by virtue of its total lack of significance. Such a phrase — employed with tireless irrelevance in journalism, and creeping into the pages of what is, by courtesy, called literature — is the "new woman." It has furnished inexhaustible jests to "Life" and "Punch," and it has been received with seriousness by those who read the present with no light from the past, and so fail to perceive that all femininity is as old as Lilith, and that the variations of the type began when Eve arrived in the Garden of Paradise to dispute the claims of her predecessor. "If the fifteenth century discovered America," says a vehement advocate of female progress, "it

was reserved for the nineteenth century to discover woman;" and this remarkable statement has been gratefully applauded by people who have apparently forgotten all about Judith and Zenobia, Cleopatra and Catherine de Medici, Saint Theresa and Jeanne d'Arc, Catherine of Russia and Elizabeth of England, who played parts of some importance, for good and ill, in the fortunes of the world.

"Les Anciens ont tout dit," and the most curious thing about the arguments now advanced in behalf of progressive womanhood is that they have an air of specious novelty about them when they have all been uttered many times before. There is scarcely a principle urged to-day by enthusiastic champions of the cause which was not deftly handled by that eminently "new" woman, Christine de Pisan, in the fourteenth century, before the court of Charles VI. of France. If we read even a few pages of "La Cité des Dames," — and how delightfully modern is the very title! — we recognize the same familiar sentiments, albeit disguised in archaic language and with many old-time conceits, that we are accus-

tomed to hearing every day. Christine is both amused and wearied, as are we, by the foolish invectives of men against our useful and necessary sex. She is forced to conclude that God had made a foul thing when He made woman, yet wonders a little — not unnaturally — that "so worshipful a Workman should have deigned to turn out so poor a piece of work." This leads her to reflect on our alleged weakness and incapacity, of which she finds, as do we, but insufficient proof. She is firm to insist, as do we, that if little maidens are put to school, and carefully taught the sciences like men-children, they learn as well, and make as steady progress. What is more, she is able to prove her case, which we often are not, by writing a grave, solid, and systematic treatise on arms and the science of war; a treatise which handles every topic from the details of a siege to safe conducts, military passports, and the laws of knightly courtesy. And this complete soldier's manual was held to be of practical value and an authority in those battle-loving days. It may also be worth while to mention that Christine de Pisan

supported an invalid husband, two poor relations, and three children by her pen; and what more could any struggling authoress of our own century be reasonably expected to accomplish?

Another interesting fact presented for our consideration, in these days of Civic Clubs and active training for citizenship, is that one of the first Englishwomen who entered the field of letters professionally, as a recognized rival of professional men writers, entered it as a politician, and a very acrid and scurrilous politician at that, who made herself as abhorrent and abhorred as any law-giver in England. This was Mary Manley, who, in the reign of Queen Anne, wrote the "New Atalantis," allying herself vigorously with the Tories, and pouring forth the vials of her venom on the Duke of Marlborough, and — what is harder for us to forgive — on Richard Steele, whom all women are bound to honor a little and love a great deal, as having been, in spite of many failings, our true and chivalrous friend. Not one of all the modern apologists who prate about us endlessly to-day in print, in pulpit, on the platform, and on the

stage, has reached the simple tenderness, the undeviating insight of Steele.

These things, however, counted for little with Mary Manley, who had less sentiment and less reticence than most party writers of even that outspoken and unsentimental age. Perhaps to attack those high in power who have done their country such priceless service as did the Duke of Marlborough, and to attack them, moreover, with an utter lack of decency and self-respect, is not precisely the kind of deed which warms our hearts to female politicians; but it must be confessed that if this vehement partisan in petticoats had all the acerbity of a woman, she had all the courage of one too. When her publisher was prosecuted for the scandalous libels of the "New Atalantis," she did not seek to shelter herself behind his responsibility; but appeared briskly before the Court of King's Bench, acknowledged the authorship of her book, and, with magnificent feminine effrontery, asserted it was entirely fictitious. Lord Sunderland, who examined her, and who appears to have been vastly diverted by the whole proceeding, pointed out urbanely certain passages of a dis-

tinctly libelous character which could scarcely have been the result of chance. "Then," replied the imperturbable Mrs. Manley, "it must have been inspiration." Again Lord Sunderland interposed with the suggestion that details of that order could not well be traced to such a source. "There are bad angels as well as good," said Mrs. Manley serenely, and escaped all penalties for her wrong-doing; earning for herself, moreover, solid rewards when the Tories returned to power, which is something that never happens to any would-be female politician of to-day.

For indeed the newly awakened and intelligent interest which women are supposed to be taking in things political is but a faint reflection of the fiery zest with which our English great-great-grandmothers threw themselves into the affairs of the nation, meddling and mending and marring everywhere, until Addison, hopeless of any other appeal, was fain to remind them that nothing was so injurious to beauty as inordinate party zeal. "It gives an ill-natured cast to the eye," he wrote warningly, "and a disagreeable sourness to the look. Besides that, it makes the lines too

strong, and flushes them worse than brandy. Indeed I never knew a party-woman who kept her countenance for a twelvemonth."

But little the ardent politicians cared for such mild arguments as these. In 1739, on the occasion of an especially important debate in the House of Lords, the Chancellor gave orders that ladies were not to be admitted, and that the gallery was to be reserved for the Commons. The Duchess of Queensberry, the Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Huntingdon, and a number of other determined women presented themselves at the door by nine o'clock in the morning. When refused entrance, the Duchess of Queensberry, with an oath as resonant as the doorkeeper's, swore that in they would come, in spite of the Chancellor and the Lords and the Commons to boot. The Peers resolved to starve them into docility, and gave orders that the doors should not be opened until they raised their siege. These Amazons stood there, so we are informed by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon, uncheered by food or drink, but solacing themselves repeatedly by thumping and kicking

at the doors with so much violence that the speakers in the House were scarcely heard. When the Lords remained unconquered by such tactics, the two duchesses, well versed in the stratagems of war, commanded half an hour of dead silence; and the Chancellor thinking this silence a certain proof of their withdrawal (the Commons, who had been kept out all this time, being very impatient to enter), the doors were finally opened; whereupon the astute and triumphant women rushed in, and promptly secured the best seats in the gallery. There they stayed, with magnificent endurance, until after eleven at night, and indulged themselves during the debate in such noisy tokens of regard or disapproval that the greatest confusion ensued. The newest of new women is but a modest and shrinking wild-flower when compared with such flaunting arrogance as this.

Nor were the "platform women," as they are unkindly called to-day, unknown or even uncommon in those good old times of domesticity; for nearly a hundred and twenty years ago the "London Mirror" printed a caustic protest against the mannishness of fashionable

ladies, their pernicious meddling with things which concerned them not, and, above all, their calm effrontery in addressing public audiences on political and social questions, "with the spirit and freedom of the boldest male orators." In fact, several societies had been already formed with the express view of enlightening the public as to the opinions of women on matters which were presumably beyond their jurisdiction, and of pushing these opinions to some ultimate and practical conclusion, — which is the precise object of similar societies to-day. For the determination of the sex from the beginning has been, not merely to assert its own intellectual independence, like the heroine of Vanbrugh's comedy, — so out of date yet so strikingly modern, — who affirms that the pleasure of women's lives is founded on entire liberty to think and to do what they please; but there was always the well-defined anticipation of influencing by unconstrained thought and action the current of affairs. They wished their voices to count. When Dr. Sacheverell was prosecuted by the Whigs for his famous sermons on the neglect of the church by the gov-

ernment, the women of London made his cause their own. All duties and all diversions gave way before the paramount excitement of this trial. Churches and theatres were alike deserted. "The ladies lay aside their tea and chocolate," writes Defoe pleasantly, "leave off visiting after dinner, and, forming themselves into cabals, turn privy councillors, and settle the affairs of state. Gallantry and gayety are given up for business. Even the little girls talk politics." Lady Wentworth, with her customary acuteness, remarked that Dr. Sacheverell would make the women good housewives. The laziest of them had ceased to lie in bed in the mornings, since the trial began every day at seven. So great was the enthusiasm for the persecuted divine, that his conviction and punishment, though the latter was purely nominal, helped largely to overthrow the Whig ministry, and added one more triumph to the energetic interference, the "pernicious meddling," of women.

To understand, however, the full extent of female influence in affairs of state, we should turn to France, where for centuries the sex has played an all-important part, for good and

ill, in the ruling of the land. Any page of French history will tell this tale, from the far-off day when Brabant and Hainault, and England, too, listened to the persuasions of Joan of Valois, raised the siege of Tournay, and suffered the exhausted nation to breathe again, down to the less impetuous age when that astute princess, Charlotte Elizabeth, remarked — out of the fullness of her hatred for Mme. de Maintenon — that France had been governed by too many women, young and old, and that it was almost time the men began to take a hand. Perhaps we can best appreciate the force of feminine dominion when we read the half-amused, half-exasperated comments of Gouverneur Morris, whose diary, written on the eve of the French Revolution, reveals an intimate knowledge of that strange society, already crumbling to decay. At a dinner in the château of M. le Norrage, the political situation is discussed with so much vehemence by the men that the women's gentler voices are lost in the uproar, which sorely vexes these fair politicians, accustomed to being listened to with deference. "They will have more of this," says Morris shrewdly, "if the States

General should really fix a constitution. Such an event would be particularly distressing to the women of this country, for they would be thereby deprived of their share in the government; and hitherto they have exercised an authority almost unlimited, with no small pleasure to themselves, though not perhaps with the greatest advantage to the community."

He realizes this more fully when he goes to consult with M. de Corney on a question of finance, and finds that Mme. de Corney is well acquainted with the matter. "It is the woman's country," he writes with whimsical dismay; and he is fain to repeat the sentiment hotly and angrily when Mme. de Staël, who was not wont to be troubled by petty scruples, dupes him into showing her some papers, and gossips about them to her father and Bishop d'Autun. "She is a devilish creature," says the outraged American, feeling he has been outwitted in the game; but it is difficult, in the face of such little anecdotes, to distinguish between the new woman and the old.

One thing is tolerably sure. The new woman, to whatever century she belonged, — and she has been under varying aspects the

product of every age, — has never achieved great popularity with man. This is not wholly to her discredit; for the desire to look at life from a standpoint of her own, while irritating and subversive of general order, cannot reasonably be accounted a crime. Yet when we consider the invectives which have been hurled at women from the day they were created until now, we find that most of them have for their basis the natural indignation which is born of disregarded advice. The whole ground for complaint is summed up admirably in the angry remonstrance of Clarissa Harlowe's uncle, when his niece prefers the lover she has chosen for herself to the suitor chosen for her by her family. "I have always found a most horrid romantic perverseness in your sex," says this experienced old man. "To do and to love what you should not, is meat, drink, and vesture to you all." There lies the argument in a nutshell; and if Richardson be the first great English novelist who has painted for us a woman moved by the secret and powerful impulses of her heart, the unwritten and irrefutable laws of her own nature, he has also expressed for us in brief and accurate

phraseology the masculine reading of this problem. "Nothing worse than woman can befall mankind," says Sophocles apprehensively; and far-off Hesiod, as cheerless, but somewhat more philosophical, explains that our sex is a necessary deduction from the coveted happiness of life. Burton tells us of an excellent old anchorite who fell into a "cold palsy" whenever a woman was brought before him; which pious and consistent behavior is more to my liking than the gay ingratitude of the Greeks, who drew their inspiration from the fairness and weakness, the passion and pain of women, and then bequeathed to all coming ages the weight of their dispassionate condemnation. Better to me is the old Sanskrit saying, "The hearts of women are as the hearts of wolves;" or the Turkish jibe anent the length of our hair and the shortness of our wits; or that last and final verdict from the pen of our modern analyst, Mr. George Meredith, "Woman will be the last thing civilized by man," — an ambiguously brilliant epigram which waits for the elucidation of the critics.

The really curious thing is, not that we

should have been found in a general way unsatisfactory, which was to be expected, but that we should be held to blame for such widely divergent desires. Take for example the indifference of women to intellectual pursuits, which has earned for them centuries of masculine contempt; and their thirst for intellectual pursuits, which has earned for them centuries of masculine disapprobation. On the one hand, we have some of the most delightful writers England has known, calmly reminding them that sewing is their one legitimate occupation. "Now for women," says dear old Robert Burton, "instead of laborious studies, they have curious needlework, cutwork, spinning, bonelace, and many pretty devices of their own making with which to adorn their houses." Addison, a hundred years later, does not seem to have advanced one step beyond this eminently conservative attitude. He wishes with all his heart that women would apply themselves more to embroidery and less to rhyme, a wish which was heartily echoed by Edward Fitzgerald, who carried unimpaired to the nineteenth century these sound and orthodox principles. Addison would

rather listen to his fair friends discussing the merits of red and blue embroidery silks than the merits of Whigs and Tories. He would rather see them work the whole of the battle of Blenheim into their tapestry frames than hear their opinions once about the Duke of Marlborough. He waxes eloquent and even vindictive — for so mild a man — over the neglect of needlework amid more stirring avocations. "It grieves my heart," he says, speaking in the character of an indignant letter-writer to the "Spectator," "to see a couple of proud, idle flirts sipping their tea for a whole afternoon" — and doubtless discussing politics with heat — "in a room hung round with the industry of their great-grandmothers."

It has been observed before this that it is always the great-grandmothers in whom is embodied the last meritoriousness of the sex; always the great-grandmothers for whom is cherished this pensive masculine regard. And it may perhaps be worth while to note that these "proud, idle flirts" of Addison's day have now become *our* virtuous great-grandmothers, and occupy the same shadowy ped-

estal of industrious domesticity. I have little doubt that *their* great-grandmothers, who worked — or did not work — the tapestries upon the Addisonian walls, were in their day the subject of many pointed reproaches, and bidden to look backward on the departed virtues of still remoter generations. And, by the same token, it is encouraging to think that, in the years to come, we too shall figure as lost examples of distinctly feminine traits; we too shall be praised for our sewing and our silence, our lack of learning and our "stayat-homeativeness," that quality which Peacock declared to be the finest and rarest attribute of the sex. What a pleasure for the new woman of to-day, who finds herself vilified beyond her modest deserts, to reflect that she is destined to shine as the revered and faultless great-grandmother of the future.

To return, however, to the contrasting nature of the complaints lodged against her in her more fallible character of great-granddaughter. Hazlitt, who was by no means indifferent to women nor to their regard, clearly and angrily asserted that intellectual attainments in a man were no recommenda-

tion to the female heart, — they merely puzzled and annoyed. "If scholars talk to women of what they can understand," he says, "their hearers are none the wiser; if they talk of other things, they only prove themselves fools." Mr. Walter Bagehot was quite of Hazlitt's opinion, save that his serener disposition remained unvexed by a state of affairs which seemed to him natural and right. He thought it, on the whole, a wise ordinance of nature that women should look askance upon all intellectual superiority, and that genius should simply "put them out." — "It is so strange. It does not come into the room as usual. It says such unpleasant things. Once it forgot to brush its hair." The well-balanced feminine mind, he insisted, prefers ordinary tastes, settled manners, customary conversation, defined and practical pursuits.

But are women so comfortably and happily indifferent to genius? Some have loved it to their own destruction, feeding it as oil feeds flame; and other some have fluttered about the light, singeing themselves to no great purpose, as pathetically in the way as the doomed moth. At the same time that Hazlitt

accused the whole sex of this impatient disregard for inspiration, Keats found it only too devoted at the shrine. "I have met with women," he says with frank contempt, "who I really think would like to be wedded to a poem, and given away by a novel." At the same time that Mr. Pater said coldly that there were duties to the intellect which women but seldom understood, Sir Francis Doyle protested with humorous indignation against the frenzy for female education which filled his lecture-room with petticoats, and threatened to turn the universities of England into glorified girls' schools. At the same time that Froude was writing, with the enviable self-confidence which was his blessed birthright, that it is the part of man to act and labor, while women are merely bound by "the negative obedience to prohibitory precepts;" or, in other words, that there is nothing in the world which they ought to do, but plenty which they ought to refrain from doing, Stevenson was insisting with all the vehemence of youth that it is precisely this contentment with prohibitory precepts, this deadening passivity of the female heart, which "narrows and damps

the spirits of generous men," so that in marriage a man becomes slack and selfish, "and undergoes a fatty degeneration of his moral being." Which is precisely the lesson thundered at us very unpleasantly by Mr. Rudyard Kipling in "The Gadsbys."

"You may carve it on his tombstone, you may cut it on his card,
That a young man married is a young man marred."

Now I wonder if the peasant and his donkey were in harder straits than the poor woman, who has stepped down the centuries under this disheartening, because inevitable condemnation. Always either too new or too old, too intelligent or too stupid, too restless after what concerns her not, or too passively content with narrow aims and outlooks, she is sure to be in the wrong whether she mounts her ass or leads him. Has the satire now directed against the higher education of women — a tiresome phrase reiterated for the most part without meaning — any flavor of novelty, save for those who know no satirists older than the contributors to "Punch" and "Life"? It is just as new as the new woman who provokes it, just as familiar in the annals of so-

ciety. Take as a modern specimen that pleasant verse from Owen Seaman's "Horace at Cambridge," which describes gracefully and with good temper the rush of young Englishwomen to the University Extension lectures.

> "Pencil in pouch, and syllabus in hand,
> Hugging selected poets of the land,
> Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, — all but Thomas Hood
> And Byron (more 's the pity!),
> They caught the local colour where they could;
> And members of the feminine committee
> To native grace an added charm would bring
> Of light blue ribbons, — not of abstinence,
> But bearing just this sense —
> Inquire within on any mortal thing."

This is charming, both in form and spirit, and I wish Sir Francis Doyle had lived to read it. But the same spirit and an even better form may be found in Pope's familiar lines which mock — kindly as yet, and in a friendly fashion — at the vaunted scholarship of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

> "In beauty and wit
> No mortal as yet
> To question your empire has dared;
> But men of discerning
> Have thought that, in learning,
> To yield to a lady was hard."

Even the little jibes and jeers which "Punch" and "Life" have flung so liberally at girl graduates, and over-educated young women, have their counterparts in the pages of the "Spectator," when Molly and Kitty are so busy discussing atmospheric pressure that they forget the proper ingredients for a sack posset; and when they assure their uncle, who is suffering sorely from gout, that pleasure and pain are imaginary distinctions, and that if he would only fix his mind upon this great truth he would no longer feel the twitches. When we consider that this letter to the "Spectator" was written over a hundred and eighty years ago, we must acknowledge that young England of 1711 is closely allied with young England and with young America of 1897, both of whom are ever ready to assure us that we are not, as we had ignorantly supposed ourselves to be, in pain, but only "in error." And it is even possible that old England and old America of 1897, though separated by nearly two centuries from old England of 1711, remain, when gouty, in the same darkened frame of mind, and are equally unable to grasp the joyous truths held out to them so alluringly by youth.

Is there, then, anything new? The jests of all journalism, English, French, and American, anent the mannishness of the modern woman's dress? Surely, in these days of bicycles and outdoor sports, this at least is a fresh satiric development. But a hundred and seventy-five years ago just such a piece of banter was leveled at the head of the then new and mannish woman, who, riding through the country, asks a tenant of Sir Roger de Coverley if the house near at hand be Coverley Hall. The rustic, with his eyes fixed on the cocked hat, periwig, and laced riding-coat of his questioner, answers confidently, "Yes, sir." "And is Sir Roger a married man?" queries the well-pleased dame. But by this time the bumpkin's gaze has traveled slowly downwards, and he sees with dismay that this strange apparition finishes, mermaid-fashion, in a riding-skirt. Horrified at his mistake, he falters out, "No, madam," and takes refuge from embarrassment in flight. Turn the horse into a wheel, the long skirt into a short one, or into no skirt at all, and we have here all the material needed for the ever-recurring joke presented to us so monotonously to-day.

The belligerent sex, Mr. Lang has called us, and we are not stouter fighters now than we have been through all the centuries, albeit the methods of warfare have changed somewhat, and changed perchance for ill. It is pleasant to think that in the days when muscle was better than mind (which days, thanks to our colleges, are fast returning to us), and the sword was very much mightier than the pen, women held their own as easily as they do now. Not only through the emotions they inspired, as when the fair Countess of Salisbury, beautiful, courageous, and chaste, heartened the little garrison besieged at Warwick, so that, as it is quaintly chronicled, "every man was made as valiant as two men, by reason of her kind and loving words." Not only through the loyalty they evoked, as when the heroic Countess of Montford defended her husband's cause through twelve years of well-nigh hopeless struggle, until, by her invincible bravery and determination, she placed her unheroic son upon the ducal chair of Brittany. Not only through their astuteness in diplomacy, as when the crafty Duchess of Brabant, "a lady," says Froissart, "of a very

active mind," duped England, cajoled France, and united the great houses of Burgundy and Hainault in a double marriage, overcoming the well-nigh insuperable obstacles by her woman's wit and her resistless resolution. But when it came to downright fighting, these hardy dames were not much behind their husbands and brothers in the field. In that sharp warfare which the Black Prince carried into the heart of Spain, it chanced that Sir Thomas Trivet at the head of an English force laid siege to the Castilian town of Alaro. Its garrison made a rash sortie, were trapped in an ambuscade, and nearly every man was slain or taken prisoner. Elated by this success, and deeming the town an easy prey, the English marched joyously to occupy it. But behold! the women had closed the gates and barriers, mounted the battlements, and were ready to defend themselves against all comers. Their men might be foolish enough to fall into the enemy's snares, but they would look after their homes. Sir Thomas, like the gallant Englishman he was, refused to make the attack. "See these good women," he said, "standing like wolf-dogs on their walls. Let

us turn back, and God grant our English wives to be as brave in battle."

The ludicrous side of female belligerency has seldom been lacking in history. It is admirably illustrated by the story, at once absurd and tragic, of the unfortunate William Scott of Harden, whose wife, an aggressively pious woman, insisted on attending the forbidden meetings of the Covenanters. Scott was called before the Council, and told to keep his lady at home. He answered, frankly and sadly, that he could not. The Council, arguing after the fashion of the Queen in "Alice in Wonderland," insisted that if he had a wife he could oblige her to obey him, and dismissed him with a serious warning. Off to the Eildon Hills went Madam Scott, and prayed as hard as ever. Her husband received a second summons from the Council, and was fined a thousand pounds for her obstinate recusancy. Madam Scott, who now occupied the proud yet comfortable position of a martyr for the faith whose sufferings were borne vicariously by another, clung more insistently than before to her religious rights. Scott was fined another thousand pounds.

Madam Scott merely denounced the persecutors of the righteous with redoubled vehemence at the next gathering of the elect. The luckless man was then actually imprisoned in the Bass Fortress, where he remained three years, while his triumphant spouse, secure from molestation, trod her saintly path, and prayed whenever and wherever she desired. The revolting wife is not invariably a thing of beauty, but it is hard to see how she could carry her spirit of independence any farther.

For indeed all that we think so new to-day has been acted over and over again, a shifting comedy, by the women of every century. All that we value as well as all that we condemn in womanhood has played its part for good and for evil in the history of mankind. To talk about either sex as a solid embodiment of reform is as unmeaning as to talk about it as a solid embodiment of demoralization. If the mandrake be charmed by a woman's touch, as Josephus tells us, the rue, says Pliny, dies beneath her fingers. She has made and marred from the beginning, she will make and mar to the end. The best and newest daugh-

ter of this restless generation may well read envyingly Sainte Beuve's brief description of Mme. de Sévigné, a picture drawn with a few strokes, clear, delicate, and convincing. "She had a genius for conversation and society, a knowledge of the world and of men, a lively and acute appreciation both of the becoming and the absurd." Such women make the world a pleasant place to live in; and, to the persuasive qualities which win their way through adamantine resistance, Mme. de Sévigné added that talent for affairs which is the birthright of her race, that talent for affairs which we value so highly to-day, and the broader cultivation of which is perhaps the only form of newness worth its name. Since Adam delved and Eve span, life for all of us has been full of labor; but as the sons of Adam no longer exclusively delve, so the daughters of Eve no longer exclusively spin. In fact, delving and spinning, though admirable occupations, do not represent the sum total of earthly needs. There are so many, many other useful things to do, and women's eager finger-tips burn to essay them all.

"Cora 's riding, and Lilian 's rowing,
Celia's novels are books one buys,
Julia 's lecturing, Phillis is mowing,
Sue is a dealer in oils and dyes;
Flora and Dora poetize,
Jane is a bore, and Bee is a blue,
Sylvia lives to anatomize,
Nothing is left for the men to do."

The laugh has a malicious ring, yet it is good-tempered too, as though Mr. Henley were not sufficiently enamoured of work to care a great deal who does it in his place. Even the plaintive *envoy* is less heart-rending than he would have it sound, and in its familiar burden we catch an old-time murmur of forgotten things.

"Prince, our past in the dust-heap lies!
Saving to scrub, to bake, to brew,
Nurse, dress, prattle, and scandalize,
Nothing is left for the men to do."

THE DEATHLESS DIARY.

FOUR ways there are of telling a curious world that endless story of the past which it is never tired of hearing. History, memoir, biography, and the diary run back like four smooth roads, connecting our century, our land, our life, with other centuries and lands and lives that have all served in turn to make us what we are. Of these four roads, I like the narrowest best. History is both partial and prejudiced, sinning through lack of sympathy as well as through lack of truth. Memoirs are too often false and malicious. Biographies are misleading in their flattery: there is but one Boswell. Diaries tell their little tales with a directness, a candor, conscious or unconscious, a closeness of outlook, which gratifies our sense of security. Reading them is like gazing through a small clear pane of glass. We may not see far and wide, but we see very distinctly that which comes within our field of vision.

In those happy days when leisure was held to be no sin, men and women wrote journals whose copiousness both delights and dismays us. Neither "eternal youth" nor "nothing else to do" seems an adequate foundation for such structures. They were considered then a profitable waste of time, and children were encouraged to write down in little books the little experiences of their little lives. Thus we have the few priceless pages which tell "pet Marjorie's" story; the incomparable description of Hélène Massalski's schooldays at the Abbaye de Notre Dame aux Bois; the demure vivacity of Anna Green Winslow; the lively, petulant records of Louisa and Richenda Gurney; the amusing experiences of that remarkable and delightful urchin, Richard Doyle. These youthful diaries, whether brief or protracted, have a twofold charm, revealing as they do both child-life and the child itself. It is pleasant to think that one of the little Gurneys, who were all destined to grow into such relentlessly pious women that their adult letters exclude the human element absolutely in favor of spiritual admonitions, was capable, when she was young, of such a defiant senti-

ment as this: "I read half a Quaker's book through with my father before meeting. I am quite sorry to see him grow so Quakerly." Or, worse and worse: "We went on the highway this afternoon for the purpose of being rude to the folks that passed. I do think being rude is most pleasant sometimes."

Of course she did, poor little over-trained, over-disciplined Richenda, and her open confession of iniquity contrasts agreeably with the anxious assurance given by Anna Winslow to her mother that there had been "no rudeness, Mamma, I assure you," at her evening party. Naturally, a diary written by a little girl for the scrutiny and approbation of her parents is a very different thing from a diary written by a little girl for her own solace and diversion. The New England child is always sedate and prim, mindful that she is twelve years old, and that she is expected to live up to a rather rigorous standard of propriety. She would no more dream of going into the highway "for the purpose of being rude to the folks that passed" than she would dream of romping with boys in those decorous Boston streets where, as Mr. Birrell pleasantly puts it, "re-

spectability stalked unchecked." Neither does she consider her diary a vent for naughty humors. She fills it with a faithful account of her daily occupations and amusements, and we learn from her how much wine and punch little New England girls were allowed to drink a hundred years ago; how they danced five hours on an unsustaining supper of cakes and raisins; how they sewed more than they studied, and studied more than they played; and what wondrous clothes they wore when they were permitted to be seen in company.

"I was dressed in my yelloe coat black bib and apron," writes Anna in an unpunctuated transport of pride, "black feathers on my head, my paste comb and all my paste garnet marquasett and jet pins, together with my silver plume, my locket, rings, black collar round my neck, black mitts and yards of blue ribbon (black and blue is high taste) striped tucker and ruffles (not my best) and my silk shoes completed my dress."

And none too soon, thinks the astonished reader, who fancied in his ignorance that little girls were plainly clad in those fine old days of simplicity. Neither Marie Bashkirtseff

nor Hélène Massalski cared more about frippery than did this small Puritan maid. Indeed, Hélène, after one passionate outburst, resigned herself with great good humor to the convent uniform, and turned her alert young mind to other interests and pastimes. If the authenticity of her childish copy-books can be placed beyond dispute, no youthful record rivals them in vivacity and grace. It was the fashion among the older *pensionnaires* of Notre Dame aux Bois to keep elaborate journals, and the little Polish princess, though she tells us that she wrote so badly as to be in perpetual penance for her disgraceful "tops and tails," scribbled away page after page with reckless sincerity and spirit. She is so frank and gay, so utterly free from pretense of any kind, that English readers, or at least English reviewers, appear to have been somewhat scandalized by her candor; and these innocent revelations have been made the subject of serious diatribes against convent schools, which, it need hardly be said, have altered radically in the past century, and were, at their worst, better than any home training possible in Hélène Massalski's day. And what fervor

and charm in her affectionate description of that wise and witty, that kind and good nun, Madame de Rochechouart! What freedom throughout from the morbid and unchildish vanity of Marie Bashkirtseff, whose diary is simply a vent for her own exhaustless egotism! There must always be some moments in life when it becomes impossible for us, however self-centred, to intrude our personalities further upon our rebellious families and friends. There must come a time when nobody will think of us, nor look at us, nor listen to us another minute. Then how welcome is the poor little journal which cannot refuse our confidences! What Rousseau did on a large scale, Marie Bashkirtseff copied on a smaller one. Both made the world their father confessor, and the world has listened with a good deal of attention to their tales, partly from an unquenchable interest in unhealthy souls, and partly from sheer self-complacency and pride. There is nothing more gratifying to human nature than the opportunity of contrasting our own mental and spiritual soundness with the disease which cries aloud to us for scrutiny.

If the best diaries known in literature have

been written by men, the greater number have been the work of women. Even little girls, as we have seen, have taken kindly enough to the daily task of translating themselves into pages of pen and ink; but little boys have been wont to consider this a lamentable waste of time. It is true we have such painful and precocious records as that of young Nathaniel Mather, who happily died before reaching manhood, but not before he had scaled the heights of self-esteem, and sounded the depths of despair. When a boy, a real human boy, laments and bewails in his journal that he whittled a stick upon the Sabbath Day, "and, for fear of being seen, did it behind the door, — a great reproach of God, and a specimen of that atheism I brought into the world with me," — we recognize the fearful possibilities of untempered sanctimony. Boyhood, thank Heaven, does not lend itself easily to introspection, and seldom finds leisure for remorse. As a rule, a lad commits himself to a diary, as to any other piece of work, only because it has been forced upon him by the voice of authority. It was the parental mandate, thinly disguised under parental counsel,

which started young Dick Doyle on that delightful journal in which spirited sketches alternate with unregenerate adventures and mishaps. He begins it with palpable reluctance the first day of January, 1840; fears modestly that it "will turn out a hash;" hopes he may be "skinned alive by wildcats" if he fails to persevere with it; draws an animated picture of himself in a torn tunic running away from seven of these malignant animals that pursue him over tables and chairs; and finally settles down soberly and cheerfully to work. The entries grow longer and longer, the drawings more and more elaborate, as the diary proceeds. A great deal happened in 1840, and every event is chronicled with fidelity. The queen is married in the beginning of the year; a princess royal is born before its close. "Hurra! Hurra!" cries loyal Dick. Prince Louis Napoleon makes his famous descent upon Boulogne, and Dick sketches him sailing dismally away on a life-buoy. Above all, the young artist scores his first success, and the glory of having one of his drawings actually lithographed and sold is more than he can bear with sobriety. "Just imagine," he

writes, "if I was walking coolly along, and came upon the Tournament in a shop window. Oh, cricky! it would be enough to turn me inside out."

He survives this joyous ordeal, however, and toils gayly on until the year is almost up and the appointed task completed. On the 3d of December a serious-minded uncle invites him to go to Exeter Hall, an entertainment which the other children flatly and wisely decline. What he heard in that abode of dismal oratory we shall never know, for, stopping abruptly in the middle of a sentence, — "Uncle was going somewhere else first, and had started," — Richard Doyle's diary comes to an untimely end.

And this is the fate of all those personal records which have most deeply interested and charmed us. It is so easy to begin a journal, so difficult to continue it, so impossible to persevere with it to the end. Bacon says that the only time a man finds leisure for such an engrossing occupation is when he is on a sea voyage, and naturally has nothing to write about. Perhaps the reason why diaries are ever short-lived may be found in the undue

ardor with which they are set agoing. Man is sadly diffuse and lamentably unstable. He ends by saying nothing because he begins by leaving nothing unsaid. "Le secret d'ennuyer est de tout dire." Haydon, the painter, it is true, filled twenty-seven volumes with the melancholy record of his high hopes and bitter disappointments; but then he did everything and failed in everything on the same gigantic scale. The early diary of Frances Burney is monumental. Its young writer finds life so full of enjoyment that nothing seems to her too insignificant to be narrated. Long and by no means lively conversations, that must have taken whole hours to write, are minutely and faithfully transcribed. She reads "The Vicar of Wakefield," and at once sits down and tells us all she thinks about it. Her praise is guarded and somewhat patronizing, as befits the author of "Evelina." She is sorely scandalized by Dr. Primrose's verdict that murder should be the sole crime punishable by death, and proceeds to show, at great length and with pious indignation, how "this doctrine might be contradicted from the very essence of our religion," — quoting Exodus in defense

of her orthodoxy. She is charmingly frank and outspoken, and these youthful pages show no trace of that curious, half-conscious pleading with which she strives, in later days, to make posterity her confidant; to pour into the ears of future partisans like Macaulay her side of the court story, with all its indignities and honors, its hours of painful ennui, its minutes of rapturous delight.

That Macaulay should have worked himself up into a frenzy of indignation over Miss Burney's five years at court is an amusing instance of his unalterable point of view. The sacred and exalted profession of letters had in him its true believer and devotee. That kings and queens and princesses should fail to share this deference, that they should arrogantly assume the privileges of their rank when brought into contact with a successful novelist, was to him an incredible example of barbaric stupidity. The spectacle of Queen Charlotte placidly permitting the authoress of "Cecilia" to assist at the royal toilet filled him with grief and anger. It is but too apparent that no sense of intellectual unworthiness troubled her Majesty for a moment, and

this shameless serenity of spirit was more than the great Whig historian could endure. To less ardent minds it would seem that five years of honorable and well-paid service were amply rewarded by a pension for life; and that Miss Burney, however hard-worked and overdriven, must have had long, long hours of leisure in which to write the endless pages of her journal. Indeed, a woman who had time to listen to Fox speaking "with violence" for five hours, had time, one would imagine, for anything. Then what delicious excitation to sit blushing and smiling in the royal box, and hear Miss Farren recite these intoxicating lines!

> "Let sweet Cecilia gain your just applause,
> Whose every passion yields to nature's laws."

And as if this were not enough, the king, the queen, the royal princesses, all turn their heads and gaze at her for one distracting moment. "To describe my embarrassment," she falters, "would be impossible. I shrunk back, so astonished, and so ashamed of my public situation, that I was almost ready to take to my heels and run away."

Well, well, the days for such delights are over. We may say what we please about the rewards of modern novel-writing; but what, after all, is the cold praise of reviewers compared with this open glory and exaltation? It is moderately impressive to be told over and over again by Marie Corelli's American publishers that the queen of England thinks "The Soul of Lilith" and "The Sorrows of Satan" are good novels; but this mere announcement, however reassuring, — and it is a point on which we require a good deal of reassurance, — does not thrill us with the enthusiasm we should feel if her Majesty, and the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of York, and the British public united in a flattering ovation. The incidents which mark the irresistible and unwelcome changes forced upon the world by each successive generation which inhabits it are the incidents we love to read about, and which are generally considered too insignificant for narration. In a single page Addison tells us more concerning the frivolous, idle, half torpid, wholly contented life of an eighteenth-century citizen than we could learn from a dozen histories. His diaries,

meant to be purely satiric, have now become instructive. They show us, as in a mirror, the early hours, the scanty ablutions, — "washed hands, but not face," — the comfortable eating and drinking, the refreshing absence of books, the delightful vagueness and uncertainty of foreign news. A man could interest himself for days in the reported strangling of the Grand Vizier, when no intrusive cablegram came speeding over the wires to silence and refute the pleasant voice of rumor.

It is this wholesome and universal love of detail which lends to a veracious diary its indestructible charm. Charlotte Burney has less to tell us than her famous sister; but it is to her, after all, that we owe our knowledge of Dr. Johnson's worsted wig, — a present, it seems, from Mr. Thrale, and especially valued for its tendency to stay in curl however roughly used. "The doctor generally diverts himself with lying down just after he has got a fresh wig on," writes Charlotte gayly; and this habit, it must be admitted, is death and destruction to less enduring perukes. Swift's Journal to Stella — a true diary, though cast in the form of correspondence — shows us

not only the playful, tender, and caressing moods of the most savage of English cynics, but also enlightens us amazingly as to his daily habits and economies. We learn from his own pen how he bought his fuel by the half-bushel, and would have been glad to buy it by the pound; how his servant, "that extravagant whelp Peter," insisted on making a fire for him, and necessitated his picking off the coals one by one, before going to bed; how he drank brandy every morning, and took his pill as regularly as Mrs. Pullet every night; and how Stella's mother sent him as gifts "a parcel of wax candles and a bandbox full of small plum-cakes," on which plum-cakes — oh, miracle of sound digestion! — he breakfasted serenely for a fortnight.

Now, the spectacle of Dr. Swift eating plum-cakes in the early morning is like the spectacle of Mr. Pepys dining with far less inward satisfaction at his cousin's table, where "the venison pasty was palpable beef." The most remarkable diary in the world is rich in the insignificance of its details. It is the sole confidant of a man who, as Mr. Lang admirably says, was his own Boswell, and its

ruthless sincerity throws the truth-telling of the great biographer into the shade. Were it not for this strange cipher record, ten years long, the world — or that small portion of it which reads history unabridged — would know Mr. Samuel Pepys, secretary to the Admiralty, as an excellent public servant, loyal, capable, and discreet. The bigger, lazier world, to which he is now a figure so familiar, would never have heard of him at all, thereby losing the most vivid bit of human portraiture ever given for our disedification and delight.

We can understand how Mr. Pepys found time to write his diary when we remember that he was commonly in his office by four o'clock in the morning. We can appreciate its wonderful candor when we realize how safe he thought it from investigation. With the reproaches of his own conscience he was probably familiar, and the crowning cowardice of self-told lies offered no temptation to him. "Why should we seek to be deceived?" asks Bishop Butler, and Mr. Pepys might have answered truthfully that he did n't. The romantic shading, the flimsy and false excuses with which we are wont to color our inmost

thoughts, have no place in this extraordinary chronicle. Its writer neither deludes himself, like Bunyan, nor bolsters up his soul, like Rousseau, with swelling and insidious pretenses. It is a true "Human Document," full of meanness and kindness, of palpable virtues and substantial misdemeanors. Mr. Pepys is unkind to his wife, yet he loves her. He is selfish and ostentatious, yet he denies himself the coveted glory of a coach and pair to give a marriage portion to his sister. He seeks openly his own profit and gratification, yet he is never without an active interest in the lives and needs of other people. Indeed, so keen and so sensible are his solutions of social problems, or what passed for such in that easy age, that had philanthropy and its rewards been invented in the reign of Charles II. we should doubtless see standing now in London streets a statue of Mr. Samuel Pepys, prison reformer, and founder of benevolent institutions for improving and harrowing the poor.

If the principal interest of this famous diary lies in its unflinching revelation of character, a charm no less enduring may be found in all

the daily incidents it narrates. We like to know how a citizen of London lived two hundred years ago: what clothes he wore, what food he ate, what books he read, what plays he heard, what work and pleasure filled his waking hours. And I would gently suggest to those who hunger and thirst after the glories of the printed page that if they will only consent to write for posterity, — not as the poets say they do, and do not, but as the diarist really and truly does, — posterity will take them to its heart and cherish them. They may have nothing to say which anybody wants to listen to now; but let them jot down truthfully the petty occurrences, the pleasant details of town or country life, and, as surely as the world lasts, they will one day have a hearing. We live in a strange period of transition. Never before has the old order changed as rapidly as it is changing now. O writers of dull verse and duller prose, quit the well-worked field of fiction, the arid waste of sonnets and sad poems, and chronicle in little leather-covered books the incidents which tell their wondrous tale of resistless and inevitable change. Write of electric motors, of

bicycles, of peace societies, of hospitals for pussy cats, of women's clubs and colleges, of the price of food and house rent, of hotel bills, of new fashions in dress and furniture, of gay dinners, of extension lectures, of municipal corruption and reform, of robberies unpunished, of murders unavenged. These things do not interest us profoundly now, being part of our daily surroundings; but the generations that are to come will read of them with mingled envy and derision: envy because we have done so little, derision because we think that we have done so much.

If, then, it is as natural for mankind to peer into the past as to speculate upon the future, where shall we find such windows for our observation as in the diaries which show us day by day the shifting current of what once was life? We can learn from histories all we want to know about the great fire of London; but to realize just how people felt and behaved in that terrible emergency we should watch the alert and alarmed Mr. Pepys burying not only his money and plate, but his wine and Parmesan cheese. We have been taught at school much more than we ever

wanted to know about Cromwell, and the Protectorate, and Puritan England; yet to breathe again that dismal and decorous air we must go to church with John Evelyn, and see, instead of the expected rector, a sour-faced tradesman mount the pulpit, and preach for an hour on the inspiriting text, "And Benaiah . . . went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow." The pious and accomplished Mr. Evelyn does not fancy this strange innovation. Like other conservative English gentlemen, he has little leaning to "novices and novelties" in the house of God; and he is even less pleased when all the churches are closed on Christmas Day, and a Puritan magistrate speaks, in his hearing, "spiteful things of our Lord's Nativity." His horror at King Charles's execution is never mitigated by any of the successive changes which followed that dark deed. He is repelled in turn by the tyranny of Cromwell, the dissoluteness of Charles II., the Catholicity of James, and the heartlessness of Queen Mary, "who came to Whitehall jolly and laughing as to a wedding," without even a decent pretense of pity for her exiled father. He firmly

believes in witchcraft, — as did many other learned and pious men, — and he persists in upsetting all our notions of galley slaves and the tragic horror of their lot by affirming the miserable creatures at Marseilles to be "cheerful and full of knavery," and hardly ever without some trifling occupation at which they toiled in free moments, and by which they made a little money for the luxuries and comforts that they craved.

In fact, an air of sincere and inevitable truthfulness robs John Evelyn's diary of all that is romantic and sentimental. We see in it the life of a highly cultivated and deeply religious man, whose fate it was to witness all those tremendous and sovereign changes which swept over England like successive tidal waves between the execution of the Earl of Strafford and the accession of Queen Anne. Sharp strife; the bitter contention of creeds; England's one plunge into republicanism, and her abrupt withdrawal from its grim embraces; the plague; the great fire, with "ten thousand houses all in one flame;" the depth of national corruption under the last Stuarts; the obnoxious and unpalatable remedy adminis-

tered by the house of Orange; the dawning of fresh prosperity and of a new literature, — all these things Mr. Evelyn saw, and noted with many comments in his diary. And from all we turn with something like relief to read about the fire-eater, Richardson, who delighted London by cooking an oyster on a red-hot coal in his mouth, or drinking molten glass as though it had been ale, and who would have made the fortune of any modern museum. Or perhaps we pause to pity the sorrows of landlords, always an ill-used and persecuted race; for Sayes Court, the home of the Evelyns, with its famous old trees and beautiful gardens, was rented for several years to Admiral Benbow, who sublet it in the summer of 1698 to Peter the Great, and the royal tenant so trampled down and destroyed the flower-beds that no vestige of their loveliness survived his ruthless tenancy. The Tsar, like Queen Elizabeth, was magnificent when viewed from a distance, but a most disturbing element to introduce beneath a subject's humble roof.

If Defoe, that master of narrative, had written fewer political and religious tracts, and had kept a journal of his eventful career, what

welcome and admirable reading it would have made! If Lord Hervey had been content to tell us less about government measures, and more about court and country life, his thick volumes would now be the solace of many an idle hour. So keen a wit, so powerful and graphic a touch, have never been wasted upon matters of evanescent interest. History always holds its share of the world's attention. The charm of personal gossip has never been known to fail. But political issues, once dead, make dull reading for all but students of political economy; and they, browsing by choice amid arid pastures, scorn nothing so much as the recreative. Yet Lord Hervey's epigrammatic definition of the two great parties, patriots and courtiers, as "Whigs out of place and Whigs in place," shows how vital and long-lived is humor; and the trenchant cynicism of his unkind pleasantry is more easily disparaged than forgotten.

On the other hand, we can never be sufficiently grateful that Gouverneur Morris, instead of writing industrious pamphlets on the causes that led to the French Revolution, has left us his delightful diary, with its vivid pic-

ture of social life and of the great storm-cloud darkening over France. In his pages we can breathe freely, unchoked by that lurid and sulphuric atmosphere so popular with historians and novelists rehearsing "on the safe side of prophecy." His courage is of the unsentimental order, his perceptions are pitiless, his common sense is invulnerable. He has the purest contempt for the effusive oath-taking of July 14, the purest detestation for the crimes and cruelties that followed. He persistently treads the earth, and is in no way dazzled by the mad flights into ether which were so hopelessly characteristic of the time. Not even Sir Walter Scott — a man as unlike Morris as day is unlike night — could be more absolutely free from the unwholesome influences which threatened the sanity of the world, and of Scott's journal it is difficult to speak with self-possession. Our thanks are due primarily to Lord Byron, whose Ravenna diary first started Sir Walter on this daily task, — a task which grew heavier when the sad years came, but which shows us now, as no word from other lips or other pen could ever show us, the splendid courage, the boundless charity, the simple,

unconscious goodness of the man whom we may approach closer and closer, and only love and reverence the more. Were it not for this journal, we should never have known Scott, — never have known how sad he was sometimes, how tired, how discouraged, how clearly aware of his own fast-failing powers. We should never have valued at its real worth his unquenchable gayety of heart, his broad, genial, reasonable outlook on the world. His letters, even in the midst of trouble, are always cheerful, as the letters of a brave man should be. His diary alone tells us how much he suffered at the downfall of hopes and ambitions that had grown deeper and stronger with every year of life. "I feel my dogs' feet on my knees, I hear them whining and seeking me everywhere," he writes pathetically, when the thought of Abbotsford, closed and desolate, seems more than he can bear; and then, obedient to those unselfish instincts which had always ruled his nature, he adds with nobler sorrow, "Poor Will Laidlaw! poor Tom Purdie! This will be news to wring your hearts, and many an honest fellow's besides, to whom my prosperity was daily bread."

Of all the journals bequeathed to the world, and which the wise world has guarded with jealous care, Sir Walter's makes the strongest appeal to honest human nature, which never goes so far afield in its search after strange gods as to lose its love for what is simply and sanely good. We hear a great deal about the nobler standards of modernity, and about virtues so fine and rare that our grandfathers knew them not; but courage and gayety, a pure mind and a kind heart, still give us the assurance of a man. The pleasant duty of admonishing the rich, the holy joy of preaching a crusade against other people's pleasures, are daily gaining favor with the elect; but to the unregenerate there is a wholesome flavor in cheerful enjoyment no less than in open-handed generosity.

The one real drawback to a veracious diary is that — life being but a cloudy thing at best — the pages which tell the story make often melancholy reading. Mr. Pepys has, perhaps, the lightest heart of the fraternity, and we cannot help feeling now and then that a little more regret on his part would not be wholly unbecoming. However, his was not a day

when people moped in corners over their own or their neighbors' shortcomings; and there is no more curious contrast offered by the wide world of book-land than the life reflected so faithfully in Pepys's diary and in the sombre journal of Judge Sewall. New England is as visible in the one book as is Old England in the other, — New England under the bleak sky of an austere, inexorable, uncompromising Puritanism which dominated every incident of life. If Mr. Pepys went to see a man hanged at Tyburn, the occasion was one of some jollity, alike for crowd and for criminal; an open-air entertainment, in which the leading actor was recompensed in some measure for the severity of his part by the excitement and admiration he aroused. But when Judge Sewall attended the execution of James Morgan, the unfortunate prisoner was first carried into church, and prayed over lengthily by Cotton Mather for the edification of the congregation, who came in such numbers and pressed in such unruly fashion around the pulpit that a riot took place within the holy walls, and Morgan was near dying of suffocation in the dullest possible manner without the gallows-tree.

It is not of hangings only and such direful solemnities that we read in Sewall's diary. Every ordinary duty — I cannot say pastime — of life is faithfully portrayed. We know the faults — sins they were considered — of his fourteen children; how they played at prayer-time or began their meals before grace was said, and were duly whipped for such transgressions. We know how the judge went courting when past middle age; how he gave the elderly Mrs. Winthrop China oranges, sugared almonds, and "gingerbread wrapped in a clean sheet of paper," and how he ingratiated himself into her esteem by hearing her grandchildren recite their catechism. He has a businesslike method of putting down the precise cost of the gifts he offered during the progress of his various wooings; for, in his own serious fashion, this gray-headed Puritan was one of the most amorous of men. A pair of shoe-buckles presented to one fair widow came to no less than five shillings threepence; and "Dr. Mather's sermons, neatly bound," was a still more extravagant *cadeau.* He was also a mighty expounder of the Scriptures, and prayed and wrestled with the sick until they

were fain to implore him to desist. There is one pathetic story of a dying neighbor to whose bedside he hastened with two other austere friends, and who was so sorely harried by their prolonged exhortations that, with his last breath, he sobbed out, "Let me alone! my spirits are gone!" — to the terrible distress and scandal of his wife.

On the whole, Judge Sewall's diary is not cheerful reading, but the grayness of its atmosphere is mainly due to the unlovely aspect of colonial life, to the rigors of an inclement climate not yet subdued by the forces of a luxurious civilization, and by a too constant consideration of the probabilities of being eternally damned. There is nowhere in its sedate and troubled pages that piercing sadness, that cry of enigmatic, inexplicable pain, which shakes the very centre of our souls when we read the beautiful short journal of Maurice de Guérin. These few pages, written with no definite purpose by a young man whose life was uneventful and whose genius never flowered into maturity, have a positive as well as a relative value. They are not merely interesting for what they have to tell;

they are admirable for the manner of the telling, and the world of letters would be distinctly poorer for their loss. Eugénie de Guérin's journal is charming, but its merits are of a different order. No finer, truer picture than hers has ever been given us of that strange, simple, patriarchal life which we can so little understand, a life full of delicate thinking and homely household duties. At Le Cayla, the lonely Languedoc château, where "one could pass days without seeing any living thing but the sheep, without hearing any living thing but the birds," the young Frenchwoman found in her diary companionship and mental stimulus, a link to bind her day by day to her absent brother for whom she wrote, and a weapon with which to fight the unconquerable disquiet of her heart. Her finely balanced nature, which resisted sorrow and ennui to the end, forced her to adopt that precision of phrase which is the triumph of French prose. There is a tender grace in her descriptions, a restraint in her sweet, sudden confidences, a wistfulness in her joy, and always a nobility of thought which makes even her gentleness seem austere.

But Maurice de Guérin had in him a power of enjoyment and of suffering which filled his life with profound emotions, and these emotions break like waves at our feet when we read the brief pages of his diary. There is the record of a single day at Le Val, so brimming with blessedness and beauty that it illustrates the lasting nature of pure earthly happiness; for such days are counted out like fairy gold, and we are richer all our lives for having grasped them once. There are passages of power and subtlety which show that nature took to her heart this trembling seeker after felicity, cast from him the chains of care and thought, and bade him taste for one keen hour "the noble voluptuousness of freedom." Then, breaking swiftly in amid vain dreams of joy, comes the bitter moment of awakening, and the sad voice of humanity sounds wailing in his ears.

"My God, how I suffer from life! Not from its accidents, — a little philosophy suffices for them, — but from itself, from its substance, from all its phenomena."

And ever wearing away his heart is the restlessness of a nature which craved beauty for

its daily food, which longed passionately for whatever was fairest in the world, for the lands and the seas he was destined never to behold. Eugénie, in her solitude at Le Cayla, trained herself to echo with gentle stoicism the words of À Kempis: "What canst thou see anywhere that thou seest not here? Behold the heavens and the earth and all the elements! For out of these are all things made." Her horizon was bounded by the walls of home. She worked, she prayed, she read her few books, she taught the peasant children the little it behooved them to know; she played with the gray cat, and with the three dogs, Lion, Wolf, and little Trilby whom she loved best of all, and from whom, rather than from a stupid fairy tale, it may be that Du Maurier stole his heroine's name. She won peace, if not contentment, by the fulfillment of near duties; but in her brother the unquenchable desire of travel burned like a smouldering fire. In dreams he wandered far amid ancient and sunlit lands whose mighty monuments are part of the mysterious legends of humanity. "The road of the wayfarer is a joyous one!" he cries. "Ah! who shall set me adrift upon

the Nile!" — and with these words the journal of Maurice de Guérin comes to a sudden end. A river deeper than the Nile was opening beneath his passionate, tired young eyes. Remoter lands than Egypt lay before his feet.

GUIDES: A PROTEST.

"LIFE," sighed Sir George Cornwall Lewis, "would be endurable, if it were not for its pleasures;" and the impatient wanderer in far-off lands is tempted to paraphrase this hackneyed truism into, "Traveling would be enjoyable, if it were not for its guides." Years ago, Mark Twain endeavored to point out how much fun could be derived from these "necessary nuisances" by a judicious course of chaffing; and the apt illustrations of his methods furnished some of the most amusing passages in "Innocents Abroad." But it is not every tourist who bubbles over with mirth, and that unquenchable spirit of humor which turns a trial into a blessing. The facility for being diverted where less fortunate people are annoyed is a rare birthright, and worth many a mess of pottage. Moreover, in these days when Baedeker smooths the traveler's path to knowledge, guides are no longer "necessary nuisances." They are plagues to no pur-

pose, whose persistency deprives inoffensive strangers of that tranquil enjoyment they have come so far to seek. Nothing is more difficult than to dilate with a correct emotion when every object of interest is pointed rigorously out, and a wearisome trickle of information, couched in broken English, is dropped relentlessly into our tired ears.

It need not be supposed for a moment that there is any real option about employing a guide or dispensing with his services. There is none. Practically speaking, I don't employ him. He takes possession of me, and never relaxes his hold. In some parts of Europe, Sicily for example, his unlawful ownership begins from the first moment I set my foot upon the soil. At Syracuse he is waiting at the station, in charge of the hotel coach. I think him the hotel porter, point out our bags, and give him the check for our boxes. As soon as we are under way, he leans over and informs us confidentially that he is the English interpreter and guide, officially connected with the hotel, and that he is happy to place his services at our disposal. At these ominous words our hearts sink heavily. We know

that the hour of captivity is at hand, and that all efforts to escape will only tighten our chains. Nevertheless, we make the effort that very day, resolved not to yield without a struggle.

The afternoon is drawing to a close by the time we are settled in our rooms, have had a cup of tea, and have washed away some of the dirt of travel. There is only light enough left for a short stroll; and this first walk through a strange city is one of my principal pleasures in traveling. I love to find myself amid the unfamiliar streets; to slip into quiet churches; to stare in shop-windows; to wander, with no other clue than Baedeker, through narrow byways, and stumble unaware upon some open court, with its fine old fountain splashing lazily over the worn stones. Filled with these agreeable anticipations, we steal downstairs, and see our guide standing like a sentinel at the door. He is prepared to accompany us, but we decline his services, explaining curtly that we are only going out for a walk, and need no protection whatever. It sounds decisive — to us — and we congratulate one another upon such well-timed firm-

ness, until, glancing back, we perceive our determined guardian following us on the other side of the street. Now, as long as we keep straight ahead, pretending to know our way, we are safe; but the trouble is we don't know our way, and in a few minutes it is necessary to consult Baedeker and find out where we are. We do this as furtively as possible, gathering around the book to hide it, and moving slowly on while we read. But such foolish precautions are in vain. The guide has seen us pause. He knows that we are astray, that we are trying to right ourselves, — a thing he never permits, — and he is by our side in an instant. If the ladies desire to see the cathedral, they must turn to the left. It is very near, — not more than a few minutes' walk, — and it is open until six o'clock. We think of saying that we don't want to see the cathedral, and of turning to the right; but this course appears rather too perilous. The fact is, we do want to see it very much; and we should like, moreover, to see it without delay, and alone. So we thank Brocconi, — that is the guide's name, — and say we can find our way now without

any trouble. And so we could, if we were left to ourselves; but the knowledge that we are still being pursued at a respectful distance, and that we dare not pause a moment for consideration, flusters us sadly. We come to a point where two streets meet at an acute angle, hesitate, plunge down the nearer, and hear Brocconi's warning voice once more at our elbows. The ladies have taken a wrong turning. With their permission, he will point them out the road. So we surrender at discretion, feeling all further resistance to be useless, and are conducted to the cathedral in a pitiable state of subjection; are marched dolorously around; are shown old tombs, and faded pictures, and beautiful bits of mosaic; and then are led back to the hotel, and dismissed with the assurance that we will be waited on early the next morning, and that a carriage will be ready for us by ten.

Perhaps our conduct may appear pusillanimous to those whose resolution has never been so severely tested. We feel this ourselves, and deplore the cowardly strain in our natures, as we trail meekly and disconsolately upstairs. There is a little cushioned bench just outside

my bedroom door, and I know that when I go to breakfast in the morning Brocconi will be sitting there, waiting for his prey. I know that when I come back from breakfast Brocconi will be still sitting there, and that I can never leave my room without seeing him in unquestioned and ostentatious attendance upon me. He stands up, hat in hand, to salute me, every time I pass him; and after a while I take to lurking, I might almost say to skulking within my chamber, rather than encounter his disappointed and reproachful gaze. With the natural tendency of a woman to temporize, I buy my freedom one day by engaging his services for the next. If he will permit me to go alone and in peace to the Greek theatre, to sit on the grassy hill amid the wild flowers, to look at the charming view and breathe the delicious air for a long, lazy afternoon, I will drive with him the following morning over the dusty glaring road to Fort Euryelus, and be marched submissively through the endless intricacies of its subterranean corridors, and have every tiresome detail pointed out to me and explained with merciless prolixity.

On the same lamentably weak principle, I

purchase — we all purchase — his faded and crumpled photographs, so as to be let off from buying his "antiquities," a forlorn collection of mouldy coins and broken bits of terra cotta, which he carries around in a handkerchief and hands down to us, one by one, when we are prisoners in our carriage, and cannot refuse to look at them. He is so pained at our giving them back again that we compromise on the photographs, though they are the most decrepit specimens I have ever beheld; almost as worn and flabby as the little letters of recommendation which are lent to us for perusal, and which state with monotonous amiability that the writer has employed Domenico Brocconi as guide and interpreter during a three days' stay in Syracuse, and has found him intelligent, capable, and obliging. I know I shall have to write one of these letters before I go away. Indeed, my conscience aches remorsefully when I think of the number of such testimonials I have strewn broadcast over the earth to be a delusion and a snare to my fellow man. It never occurred to me that any one would regard them seriously, until an acquaintance informed me,

with some asperity, that he had employed a guide on my recommendation, and had been cheated by him. I felt very sorry for this; for, beyond a little overcharging in the matter of fees or carriages, which is part of the recognized perquisites of the calling, no guide has ever cheated me. On the contrary, he has sometimes saved me money. My aversion to him is based exclusively on the fact that he strikes a discordant note wherever he appears. He has always something to tell me which I don't want to hear, and his is that leaden touch which takes all color and grace from every theme he handles.

Constantinople, as the chosen abode of insecurity, is perhaps the only city within the tourist's beaten track where a guide or dragoman is necessary for personal safety, as well as for the information he imparts. Baedeker has ignored Constantinople, or perhaps the authorities of that curiously misgoverned municipality have forbidden his profane researches into their august privacy. Labor-saving devices find scant favor with the subjects of the Sultan. Vessels may not approach the docks to be unloaded, though there is

plenty of water to float them, because that would interfere with the immemorial privileges of the boatmen. There is no delivery of city mail, but a man can always be hired to carry your letter from Pera to Stamboul. Guide-books are unknown, but a dragoman is attached to your service as soon as you arrive, and is as inseparable as your shadow until the hour you leave.

The rivalry among these men is of a very active order, as I speedily discovered when I stepped from the Oriental Express into that scene of mad confusion and tumult, the Constantinople station. It was drizzling hard. I was speechless from a heavy cold. We were all three worn out with the absurd and fatiguing travesty of a quarantine on the frontier. Twenty Turkish porters made a wild rush for our bags the instant the train stopped, and fought over them like howling beasts. A tall man with a cast in his eye, handed me a card on which my own name was legibly written, and said he was the dragoman sent by the hotel to take us in charge. A little man with a nervous and excited manner handed me a card on which also my name was

legibly written, and said *he* was the dragoman sent by the hotel to take us in charge. It was a case for the judgment of Solomon; and I lacked not only the wisdom to decide, but the voice in which to utter my decision. There was nothing for it but to let the claimants fight it out, which they proceeded to do with fervor, rolling over the station floor and pounding each other vigorously. The tall man, being much the better combatant, speedily routed his rival, dragged him ignominiously from the carriage when he attempted to scale it, and carried us off in triumph. But the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. The little dragoman was game enough not to know when he was beaten. He followed us in another carriage, and made good his case, evidently, with the hotel landlord; for we found him, placid and smiling, in the corridor next morning, waiting his orders for the day. I never ventured to ask how this change came about, lest indiscreet inquiries should bring a second dragoman upon my devoted head; so Demetrius remained our guide, philosopher, and friend for the three weeks we spent in Constantino-

ple. He was not a bad little man, on the whole; was extremely patient about carrying wraps, and was honestly anxious we should suffer no annoyance in the streets. But his knowledge upon any subject was of the haziest character. He had a perfect talent for getting us to places at the wrong time, — but that may have been partly our fault, — and if there ever was anything interesting to tell, he assuredly never told it. On the other hand, he considered that, to our Occidental ignorance, the simplest architectural devices needed an explanation. He would say, "This is a well," "That is a doorway," "These are columns supporting the roof," with all the benevolent simplicity of Harry and Lucy's father enlightening those very intelligent and ignorant little people.

The only severe trial that Demetrius suffered in our service was the occasional attendance of the two Kavasses from the American Legation, whose protection was afforded us twice or thrice, through the courtesy of the ministry. These magnificent creatures threw our poor little dragoman so completely into the shade, and regarded him with such open

and manifest contempt, that all his innocent airs of importance shriveled into humility and dejection. It is but honest to state that the Kavasses appeared to despise us quite as cordially as they did Demetrius; but we sustained their scorn with more tranquillity for the sake of the splendor and distinction they imparted. One of them was a very handsome and very supercilious Turk, who never condescended to look at us nor to speak to us; the other a Circassian, whose pride was tempered by affability, and who was good enough to hold with us the strictly necessary intercourse. I hear it is said now and then by censorious critics that American women are the most arrogant of their sex, affecting a superiority which is based upon no justifiable claim. But I candidly admit that all such airy notions, born of the New World and of the nineteenth century, dwindled rapidly away before the disdainful composure of those two lordly Mohammedans. The old primitive instincts are never wholly eradicated; only overlaid with the acquired sentiments of our time and place. I have not been without my share of self-assertion; but my meekness of spirit in

Constantinople, the perfectly natural feeling I had in being snubbed by two ignorant Kavasses blazing with gold embroidery, will always remain one of the salutary humiliations of my life.

I think there must be some secret system of communication by which the guides of one city consign you to the guides of another; for I know that when we reached Piræus at five o'clock in the morning, an olive-skinned, low-voiced, mysterious-looking person, who reminded me strikingly of Eugene Aram, boarded the ship, knocked at my cabin door, and gave me to understand, in excellent English, that we were to be his property in Athens. He said he was not connected with any hotel, but would be happy to wait on us wherever we went; and he had all three of our names neatly written in a little book. I responded as firmly as I could that I did not think we should require his services; whereupon he smiled darkly, and hinted that we would find it difficult, and perhaps dangerous, to go about alone. In reality, Athens is as well conducted as Boston, and very much easier to traverse; but I did not know this

then, so, after some hesitation, I promised to employ my mysterious visitor if I had any occasion for a guide. It was a promise not easily forgotten. Morning, noon, and night he haunted us, always with the same air of mingled secrecy and determination. As it chanced, I was ill for several days, and unable to leave my room. Regularly after breakfast there would come a low, resolute knock at my door, and Eugene Aram, pallid, noiseless, authoritative, would slip in, and stand like a sentinel by my bed. It was extremely depressing, and always reminded me of the presentation of a *lettre de cachet.* I felt that I was wronging my self-elected guide by not getting well and going about, and his civil inquiries anent my health carried with them an undertone of reproach. Yet with returning vigor came a firm determination to escape this melancholy thraldom; and it is one of my keenest pleasures to remember that on the golden afternoon when I first climbed the Acropolis, and looked through the yellow columns of the Parthenon upon the cloudless skies of Greece, and saw the sea gleaming like a silver band, and watched the glory of the

sunset from the terrace of the temple of Nike, no Eugene Aram was there to mar my absolute contentment. This was the enchanted hour, never to be repeated nor surpassed, and this hour was mine to enjoy. When I am setting forth my trials with all the wordy eloquence of discontent, let me "think of my marcies," and be grateful.

Thanks to the protecting hand of England, Cairo, which once was little better than Constantinople, is now as safe as London. On the Nile, it is hardly possible to leave one's boat, save under the care of a dragoman. Even at Luxor and Assuân, the attentions of the native population are of a rather overpowering character. But at Cairo, whether amid the hurrying crowds in the bazaars or on the quiet road to the Gézirah, there is no annoyance of any kind to be apprehended. Nevertheless, a little army of guides is connected with every hotel, and troups of irregulars line the streets, and press their services upon you as you pass. I noticed that while a great many Americans had a dragoman permanently attached to their service, and never went out unaccompanied, the English and Germans resolutely ignored

these expensive and irritating inutilities. If by chance they desired any attendant, they employed in preference one of the ruminating donkey-boys who stand all day, supple and serious, alongside of their melancholy little beasts. Upon one occasion, an Englishwoman was just stepping into her carriage, having engaged a boy to accompany her to the mosque of the Sultan Hassan, when a tall and turbaned Turk, indignant at this invasion of his privileges, called out to her scornfully, "Do you think that lad will be able to explain to you anything you are going to see?" The Englishwoman turned her smiling face. I fancied she would be angry at the impertinence, but she was not. She had that absolute command of herself and of the situation which is the birthright of her race. "It is precisely because I know he can explain nothing that I take him with me," she said. "If I could be equally sure of your silence, I should be willing to take you."

Local guides are as numerous and as systematic in Cairo as in more accessible cities, and they have the same curious tendency to multiply themselves around any object of interest,

and to subdivide the scanty labor attendant on its exhibition. When we went to the Coptic church, for example, a heavy wooden door was opened for us by youth number one, who pointed out the enormous size of the venerable key he carried, and then consigned us to the care of youth number two, who led the way through a narrow, picturesque lane to the church itself, and gave us into the charge of youth number three, a handsome, bare-legged boy with brilliant eyes, who lit a taper and kindly conducted us around. When we had examined the dim old pictures, and the faded missals, and the beautiful screens of inlaid wood, and the grotto wherein the Holy Family is piously believed to have found shelter, this acute child presented us to a white-haired Coptic priest, and explained that it was to him we were to offer our fee. I promptly did as I was bidden, and the boy, after carefully examining and approving the amount, — the priest himself never glanced at it nor at us, — requested further payment for his own share of work. I gave him three piastres, being much pleased with his businesslike methods, whereupon he handed us back to youth number two, who had

been waiting all this time at the church door, and whom I was obliged to pay for leading us through the lane. Then, after satisfying youth number one, who mounted guard at the gate, we were permitted to regain our carriage and drive away amid a clamorous crowd of beggars. It was as admirable a piece of organized work as I have ever seen, and would have done credit to a labor union in America.

On precisely the same principle, we often find the railed-off chapels of an Italian church to be each under the care of a separate sacristan, who jingles his keys alluringly, and does his best to beguile us into his own especial inclosure. I have suffered a good deal in Sicily and in Naples from sacristans who could not be brought to understand that I had come to church to pray. The mark of the tourist is like the brand of Cain, recognizable to all men. Even one's nationality is seldom a matter of doubt, and an Italian sacristan who cherishes the opinion that English-speaking people stand self-convicted of heresy, can see no reason for my entering the sacred edifice save to be shown its treasures with all speed. So he beckons to me from dark cor-

ners, and waves his keys at me; and, finding me unresponsive to these appeals, he sidles through the little kneeling throng to tell me in a loud whisper that Domenichino's picture is over the third altar on the left, or that forty-five princes of the house of Aragon are buried in the sacristy. By this time devout worshipers are beginning to look at me askance, as if it were my fault that I am disturbing them. So I get up and follow my persecutor, and stare at the forty-five wooden sarcophagi of the Aragonese princes, draped with velvet palls, and ranged on shelves like dry goods. Then, mass being over, I slip out of St. Domenica's, and make my way to the cathedral of St. Januarius, where another sacristan instantly lays hands on me, and carries me down to the crypt to see the reliquary of the saint. He is a stout, smiling man, with an unbounded enthusiasm for all he has to show. Even the naked, fat, Cupid-like angels who riot here as wantonly as in every other Neapolitan church fill him with admiration and delight. He taps them on their plump little stomachs, and exclaims, "Tout en marbre! Tout en marbre!" looking at me meanwhile

with wide-open eyes, as if marble angels were as much of a rarity in Italy as in Greenland. By the time his transports have moderated sufficiently to allow me to depart, a tall, grim sacristan, with nothing to show, is locking up the cathedral, and I am obliged to go away with all my prayers unsaid.

It is possible to be too discursive when a pet grievance has an airing. Therefore, instead of lingering, as I should like to do, over a still unexhausted subject; instead of telling about a dreadful one-eyed man who pursued me like a constable into the cathedral of Catania, and fairly arrested me at St. Agatha's shrine, whither I had fled for protection; instead of describing an unscrupulous fraud at Amalfi who led me for half a mile in the dripping rain through a soaked little valley, under pretense of showing me a macaroni factory, and then naïvely confessed we had gone in the opposite direction because the walk was so charming, — instead of denouncing the accumulated crimes of the whole sinful fraternity, I will render tardy justice to one Roman guide whose incontestable merits deserve a grateful acknowledgment. He was a bulky and very

dirty man in the Castle of St. Angelo, to whose care fourteen tourists, English, French, and Germans, were officially committed. He spoke no language but his own, and he set himself resolutely to work to make every visitor understand all he had to tell by the help of that admirable pantomimic art in which Italians have such extraordinary facility. It was impossible to misapprehend him. If he wished to show us the papal bed-chamber, he retired into one corner and snored loudly on an imaginary couch. When we came to the dining-room, he made a feint of eating a hearty meal. With amazing agility he illustrated the manner of Benvenuto Cellini's escape, and the breaking of his ankles in the fall. He decapitated himself without a sword as Beatrice Cenci, and racked himself without a rack as another unhappy prisoner. He lowered himself as a drawbridge, and even tried to explode himself as a cannon, in his efforts to make us better acquainted with the artillery. He was absolutely serious all this time, yet never seemed flustered nor annoyed by the peals of irresistible laughter which greeted some of his most difficult representations. He

had but one object in view, — to be understood. If we were amused, that did not matter; and if we were a little rude, that was merely the manner of foreigners. I do not wish to close a chapter of fault-finding without one word of praise for this clever and conscientious actor, whose performance was limited to the ignoble task of conducting travelers through a dilapidated fortress, but whom I cannot consent to look upon as a guide.

LITTLE PHARISEES IN FICTION.

In that accurate and interesting study of Puritanism which Alice Morse Earle has rather laboriously entitled "Customs and Fashions in Old New England," there is a delightful chapter devoted to the little boys and girls who lived their chastened lives under the uncompromising discipline of the church. With many prayers, with scanty play, with frequent exhortations, and a depressing consciousness of their own sinful natures, these children walked sedately in the bleak atmosphere of continual correction. By way of pastime, they were taken to church, to baptisms, and to funerals, and for reading they had the "Early Piety Series," "Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes," "The Conversion and Exemplary Lives of Several Young Children," and a "Particular Account of Some Extraordinary Pious Motions and Devout Exercises observed of late in Many Children in Siberia," — a safe and remote spot in which to locate something too

"extraordinary" for belief. To this list Cotton Mather added "Good Lessons for Children in Verse," by no means a sprightly volume, and "Some Examples of Children in whom the Fear of God was remarkably Budding before they died; in several parts of New England."

Small wonder that under this depressing burden of books, little boys and girls, too young to know the meaning of sin, were assailed with grievous doubts concerning their salvation. Small wonder that Betty Sewall, an innocent child of nine, "burst into an amazing cry" after reading a page or two of Cotton Mather, and said "she was afraid she should goe to Hell, her sins were not pardon'd." It is heart-rending to read Judge Sewall's entry in his diary: "Betty can hardly read her chapter for weeping. Tells me she is afraid she is gone back" (at nine). "Does not taste that sweetness in reading the Word which once she did. Fears that what was upon her is worn off. I said what I could to her, and in the evening pray'd with her alone." It is scant comfort for us, recalling the misery of this poor wounded child, and of many others who suf-

fered with her, to know that Phebe Bartlett was ostentatiously converted at four; that Jane Turell "asked many astonishing questions about divine mysteries," before she was five; and that an infant son of Cotton Mather's "made a most edifying end in praise and prayer," at the age of two years and seven months. We cannot forget the less happy children who, instead of developing into baby prodigies or baby prigs, fretted out their helpless hearts in nightly fears of Hell.

Nor is there in the whole of this painful precocity one redeeming touch of human childhood, such as that joyous setting forth of the little St. Theresa and her brother to convert the inhabitants of Morocco, and be martyred for their faith; an enterprise as natural to keenly imaginative children of the sixteenth century as was the expedition two hundred years later of the six little Blue Coat boys, who, without map, chart, or compass, without luggage, provisions, or money, started out one bright spring morning to find Philip Quarll's Island. Sunlight and shadow are not farther apart than the wholesome love of adventure which religion as well as history and fairy-lore can

inspire in the childish heart, and that morbid conscientiousness which impels the young to the bitter task of self-analysis. The most depressing thing about pious fiction for little people is that it so seldom takes human nature into account. I read not long ago an English Sunday-school story in which a serious aunt severely reproves her twelve-year-old niece for saying she would like to go to India and have a Bible class of native children, by telling her it is vain and foolish to talk in that way, and that what she can do is to be a better child herself, and save up her money for the mission-box. Now the dream of going to a far-off land and doing good in a lavish, semi-miraculous fashion is as natural for a pious and imaginative little girl, as is the dream of fighting savages for a less pious but equally imaginative little boy. It is well, no doubt, that all generous impulses should have some practical outlet; but the aunt's dreary counsel was too suggestive of those ethical verses, familiar to my own infancy, which began: —

> "'A penny I have,' little Mary said,
> As she thoughtfully raised her hand to her head,"

and described the anxious musings of this

weak child as to how the money might be most profitably employed, until at length she relieved herself of all moral obligation by putting it into the mission-box. It is not possible for a real little girl to sympathize with such a situation. She may give away her pennies impulsively, as Charles Lamb gave away his plum-cake, — to his lasting regret and remorse, — but she does not start out by worrying over her serious responsibility as a capitalist.

The joyless literature provided for the children of Puritanism in the New World was little less lugubrious than that which a century later, in many a well-tended English nursery, made the art of reading a thoroughly undesirable accomplishment. Happy the boy who could escape into the air and sunshine with Robinson Crusoe. Happy the girl who found a constant friend in Miss Edgeworth's little Rosamond. For always on the book-shelf sat, sombre and implacable, the unsmiling "Fairchild Family," ready to hurl texts at everybody's head, and to prove at a moment's notice the utter depravity of the youthful heart. It is inconceivable that such a book should have

retained its place for many years, and that thousands of little readers should have plodded their weary way through its unwholesome pages. For combined wretchedness and self-righteousness, for groveling fear and a total lack of charity, the "Fairchild Family" are without equals in literature, and, I hope, in life. Lucy Fairchild, at nine, comes to the conclusion "that there are very few real Christians in the world, and that a great part of the human race will be finally lost;" and modestly proposes to her brother and sister that they should recite some verses "about mankind having bad hearts." This is alacritously done, the other children being more than equal to the emergency; and each in turn quotes a text to prove that "the nature of man, after the fall of Adam, is utterly and entirely sinful." Lest this fundamental truth should be occasionally forgotten, a prayer is composed for Lucy, which she commits to memory, and a portion of which runs thus: —

"My heart is so exceedingly wicked, so vile, so full of sin, that even when I appear to be tolerably good, even then I am sinning. When I am praying, or reading the Bible, or hearing

other people read the Bible, even then I sin. When I speak, I sin; when I am silent, I sin."

In fact, an anxious alertness, a continual apprehension of ill-doing, is the keynote of this extraordinary book; and that its author, Mrs. Sherwood, considered the innocence of childhood and even of infancy an insufficient barrier to evil, is proven by an anecdote which she tells of herself in her memoirs. When she was in her fourth year, a gentleman, a guest of her father's, "who shall be nameless," took her on his knee, and said something to her which she could not understand, but which she felt at once was not fit for female ears, "especially not for the female ears of extreme youth." Indignant at this outrage to propriety, she exclaimed, "You are a naughty man!" whereupon he became embarrassed, and put her down upon the floor. That a baby of three should be so keen to comprehend, or rather not to comprehend, but to suspect an indecorum, seems well-nigh incredible, and I confess that ever since reading this incident I have been assailed with a hopeless, an undying curiosity to know what it was the "nameless" gentleman said.

The painful precocity of children anent matters profane and spiritual is insisted upon so perseveringly by writers of Sunday-school literature that Mrs. Sherwood's infancy appears to have been the recognized model for them all. In one of these stories, which claims to be the veracious history of a very young child, compared with whom, however, the "fairy babes of tombs and graves" are soberly natural and realistic, I found I was expected to believe that an infant a year old loved to hear her father read the Bible, and would lie in her cot with clasped hands, listening to the precious words. Though she could say but little, — at twelve months, — yet when she saw her parents sitting down to breakfast without either prayers or reading, she would put out her hands, and cry "No, no!" and look wistfully at the Bible on the shelf. When two years old, "she was never weary at church," nor at Sunday-school, where she sat gazing rapturously in her teacher's face. It is unnecessary for any one familiar with such tales to be assured that as soon as she could speak plainly she went about correcting, not only all the children in the neighborhood, but all the adults

as well. A friend of her father's was in the habit of petting and caressing her, though Heaven knows how he had the temerity, and she showed him every mark of affection until she heard of some serious wrong-doing — drunkenness, I think — on his part. The next time he came to the house she refused sadly to sit on his knee, "but told him earnestly her feelings about all that he had done." Finally she fell ill, and after taking bitter medicines with delight, and using her last breath to reproach her father for "not coming up to prayers," she died at the age of four and a half years, to the unexpressed, because inexpressible, relief of everybody. The standard of infant death-beds has reached a difficult point of perfection since Cotton Mather's baby set the example by making its "edifying end in praise and prayer," before it was three years old.

The enormous circulation of Sunday-school books, both in England and America, has resulted in a constant exchange of commodities. For many years we have given as freely as we have received; and if English reviewers from the first were disposed to look askance

upon our contributions, English nurseries absorbed them unhesitatingly, and English children read them, if not with interest, at least with meekness and docility. When the "Fairchild Family" and the "Lady of the Manor" crossed the Atlantic to our hospitable shores, we sent back, returning evil for evil, the "Youth's Book of Natural Theology," in which small boys and girls argue their way, with some kind preceptor's help, from the existence of a chicken to the existence of God, thus learning at a tender age the first lessons of religious doubt. At the same time that the "Leila" books and "Mary and Florence" found their way to legions of young Americans, "The Wide, Wide World," "Queechy," and "Melbourne House," — with its intolerable little prig of a heroine — were, if possible, more immoderately read in England than at home. And in this case, the serious wrong-doing lies at our doors. If the "Leila" books be rather too full of sermons and pious conversations, long conversations of an uncompromisingly didactic order, they are nevertheless interesting and wholesome, brimming with adventures, and humanized by a very agreeable sense of fun.

Moreover, these English children, although incredibly good, have the grace to be unconscious of their goodness. Even Selina, who, like young Wackford Squeers, is "next door but one to a cherubim," is apparently unaware of the fact. Leila does not instruct her father. She receives counsel quite humbly from his lips, though she is full eight years old when the first volume opens. Matilda has never any occasion to remonstrate gently with her mother; and little Alfred fails, in the whole course of his infant life, to once awaken in his parents' friends an acute sense of their own unworthiness.

This conservative attitude is due, perhaps, to the rigid prejudices of the Old World. In our freer air, children, released from thraldom, develop swiftly into guides and teachers. We first introduced into the literature of the Sunday-school the offensively pious little Christian who makes her father and mother, her uncles and aunts, even her venerable grandparents, the subjects of her spiritual ministrations. We first taught her to confront, Bible in hand, the harmless adults who had given her birth, and to annihilate their feeble arguments with

denunciatory texts. We first surrounded her with the persecutions of the worldly-minded, that her virtues might shine more glaringly in the gloom, and disquisitions on duty be never out of place. Daisy, in "Melbourne House," is an example of a perniciously good child who has the conversion of her family on her hands, and is well aware of the dignity of her position. Her trials and triumphs, her tears and prayers, her sufferings and rewards, fill two portly volumes, and have doubtless inspired many a young reader to set immediately about the correction of her parents' faults. The same lesson is taught with even greater emphasis by a more recent writer, whose works, I am told, are so exceedingly popular that she is not permitted to lay down her pen. Hundreds of letters reach her every year, begging for a new "Elsie" book; and the amiability with which she responds to the demand has resulted in a fair-sized library, — twice as many volumes probably as Sir Walter Scott ever read in the whole course of his childish life.

Now if, as the "Ladies' Home Journal" informs us, "there has been no character in American juvenile fiction who has attained

more widespread interest and affection than Elsie Dinsmore," then children have altered strangely since I was young, and "skipping the moral" was a recognized habit of the nursery. It would be impossible to skip the moral of the "Elsie" books, because the residuum would be nothingness. Lucy Fairchild and Daisy Randolph are hardened reprobates compared with Elsie Dinsmore. It is true we are told when the first book opens that she is "not yet perfect;" but when we find her taking her well-worn Bible out of her desk — she is eight years old — and consoling herself with texts for the injustice of grown-up people, we begin to doubt the assertion. When we hear her say to a visitor old enough to be her father: "Surely you know that there is no such thing as a little sin. Don't you remember about the man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath day?" the last lingering hope as to her possible fallibility dies in our dejected bosoms. We are not surprised after this to hear that she is unwilling to wear a new frock on Sunday, lest she should be tempted to think of it in church; and we are fully prepared for the assurance that she

knows her father "is not a Christian," and that she "listens with pain" to his unprincipled conjecture that when a man leads an honest, upright, moral life, is regular in his attendance at church, and observes all the laws, he probably goes to heaven. This sanguine statement is as reprehensible to Elsie as it would have been to the Fairchild family; and when Mr. Dinsmore — a harmless, but very foolish and consequential person — is taken ill, his little daughter pours out her heart "in agonizing supplication that her dear, dear papa might be spared, *at least until he was fit to go to Heaven.*"

A few old-fashioned people will consider this mental attitude an unwholesome one for a child, and will perhaps be of the opinion that it is better for a little girl to do something moderately naughty herself than to judge her parents so severely. But Elsie is a young Rhadamanthus, from whose verdicts there is no appeal. She sees with dismay her father amusing himself with a novel on Sunday, and begs at once that she may recite to him some verses. Forgetful of her principles, he asks her, when convalescing from his te-

dious illness, to read aloud to him for an hour. Alas! "The book her father bade her read was simply a fictitious moral tale, without a particle of religious truth in it, and, Elsie's conscience told her, entirely unfit for the Sabbath." In vain Mr. Dinsmore reminds her that he is somewhat older than she is, and assures her he would not ask her to do anything he thought was wrong. "'But, papa,' she replied timidly," — she is now nine, — "'you know the Bible says, "They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."'" This text failing to convince Mr. Dinsmore, he endeavors, through wearisome chapter after chapter, to break Elsie's heroic resolution, until, as a final resource, she becomes ill in her turn, makes her last will and testament, and is only induced to remain upon a sinful earth when her father, contrite and humbled, implores her forgiveness, and promises amendment. It never seems to occur to the author of these remarkable stories that a child's most precious privilege is to be exempt from serious moral responsibility; that a supreme confidence in the wisdom and goodness of his par-

ents is his best safeguard; and that to shake this innocent belief, this natural and holy creed of infancy, is to destroy childhood itself, and to substitute the precocious melancholy of a prig.

For nothing can be more dreary than the recital of Elsie's sorrows and persecutions. Every page is drenched with tears. She goes about with "tear-swollen eyes," she rushes to her room "shaken with sobs," her grief is "deep and despairing," she "cries and sobs dreadfully," she "stifles her sobs," — but this is rare, — she is "blinded with welling tears." In her more buoyant moments, a tear merely "trickles down her cheek," and on comparatively cheerful nights she is content to shed "a few quiet tears upon her pillow." On more serious occasions, "a low cry of utter despair broke from her lips," and when spoken to harshly by her father, "with a low cry of anguish, she fell forward in a deep swoon." And yet I am asked to believe that this dismal, tear-soaked, sobbing, hysterical little girl has been adopted by healthy children as one of the favorite heroines of "American juvenile fiction."

In all these books, the lesson of self-esteem and self-confidence is taught on every page. Childish faults and childish virtues are over-emphasized until they appear the only important things on earth. Captain Raymond, a son-in-law of the grown-up Elsie, hearing that his daughter Lulu has had trouble with her music-teacher, decides immediately that it is his duty to leave the navy, and devote himself to the training and discipline of his young family; a notion which, if generally accepted, would soon leave our country without defenders. On one occasion, Lulu, who is an unlucky girl, kicks — under sore provocation — what she thinks is the dog, but what turns out, awkwardly enough, to be the baby. The incident is considered sufficiently tragic to fill most of the volume, and this is the way it is discussed by the other children, — children who belong to an order of beings as extinct, I believe and hope, as the dodo: —

"'If Lu had only controlled her temper yesterday,' said Max, 'what a happy family we would be.'

"'Yes,' sighed Grace. 'Papa is punishing her very hard and very long; but of course he knows best, and he loves her.'

"'Yes, I am sure he does,' assented Max. 'So he won't give her any more punishment than he thinks she needs. It will be a fine thing for her, and all the rest of us, too, if this hard lesson teaches her never to get into a passion again.'"

Better surely to kick a wilderness of babies than to wallow in self-righteousness like this!

One more serious charge must be brought against these popular Sunday-school stories. They are controversial, and, like most controversial tales, they exhibit an abundance of ignorance and a lack of charity that are equally hurtful to a child. It is curious to see women handle theology as if it were knitting, and one no longer wonders at Ruskin's passionate protest against such temerity. "Strange and miserably strange," he cries, "that while they are modest enough to doubt their powers and pause at the threshold of sciences, where every step is demonstrable and sure, they will plunge headlong and without one thought of incompetency into that science at which the greatest men have trembled, and in which the wisest have erred." But then Ruskin, as we all know, was equally impatient

of "converted children who teach their parents, and converted convicts who teach honest men," and these two classes form valuable ingredients in Sunday-school literature. The theological arguments of the "Elsie" books would be infinitely diverting if they were not so infinitely acrimonious. One of them, however, is such a masterpiece of feminine pleading that its absurdity must win forgiveness for its unkindness. A young girl, having entered the church of Rome, is told with confidence that her hierarchy is spoken of in the seventeenth chapter of Revelations as "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." "But how do you know," she asks, not unnaturally, "that my church is meant by these lines?"

"'Because,' is the triumphant and unassailable reply, '*she and she alone answers to the description.*'"

This I consider the finest piece of reasoning that even Sunday-school books have ever yielded me. It is simply perfect; but there are other passages equally objectionable, and a little less amusing. In one of the stories, Captain Raymond undertakes to convert a

Scotch female Mormon, which he does with astonishing facility, a single conversation being sufficient to bring her to a proper frame of mind. His most powerful argument is that Mormonism must be a false religion because it so closely resembles Popery, which, he tolerantly adds, "has been well called Satan's masterpiece." The Scotch woman who, unlike most of her race, is extremely vague in her theology, hazards the assertion that Popery "forbids men to marry," while Mormonism commands it.

"'The difference in regard to that,' said Captain Raymond, 'is not so great as may appear at first sight. Both pander to men's lusts; both train children to forsake their parents; both teach lying and murder, when by such crimes they are expected to advance the cause of their church.'"

"Alas for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!"

I would the pious women who so wantonly and wickedly assail the creeds in which their fellow creatures find help and hope, would learn at least to express themselves — espe-

cially when their words are intended for little children to read — with some approach to decency and propriety.

"Gin I thocht Papistry a fause thing, *which I do*," says the sturdy, gentle Ettrick Shepherd, "I wadna scruple to say sae, in sic terms as were consistent wi' gude manners, and wi' charity and humility of heart. But I wad ca' nae man a leear." A simple lesson in Christianity and forbearance which might be advantageously studied to-day.

There is no reason why the literature of the Sunday-school, since it represents an important element in modern bookmaking, should be uniformly and consistently bad. There is no reason why all the children who figure in its pages should be such impossible little prigs; or why all parents should be either incredibly foolish and worldly minded, or so inflexibly serious that they never open their lips without preaching. There is no reason why people, because they are virtuous or repentant, should converse in stilted and unnatural language. A contrite burglar in one of these edifying stories confesses poetically, "My sins are more numerous than the hairs

of my head or the sands of the seashore," — which was probably true, but not precisely the way in which the Bill Sykeses of real life are wont to acknowledge the fact. In another tale, an English one this time, a little girl named Helen rashly asks her father for some trifling information. He gives it with the usual grandiloquence, and then adds, by way of commendation: "Many children are so foolish as to be ashamed to let those they converse with discover that they do not comprehend everything that is said to them, by which means they often imbibe erroneous ideas, and perhaps remain in ignorance on many essential subjects, when, by questioning their friends, they might easily have obtained correct and useful knowledge." If Helen ever ventured on another query after that, she deserved her fate.

Above all, there is no reason why books intended for the pleasure as well as for the profit of young children should be so melancholy and dismal in their character. Nothing is more unwholesome than dejection, nothing more pernicious for any of us than to fix our considerations stedfastly upon the seamy side

of life. Crippled lads, consumptive mothers, angelic little girls with spinal complaint, infidel fathers, lingering death-beds, famished families, innocent convicts, persecuted schoolboys, and friendless children wrongfully accused of theft, have held their own mournfully for many years. It is time we admitted, even into religious fiction, some of the conscious joys of a not altogether miserable world. I had recently in my service a pretty little housemaid barely nineteen years old, neat, capable, and good-tempered, but so perpetually downcast that she threw a cloud over our unreasonably cheerful household. I grew melancholy watching her at work. One day, going into the kitchen, I saw lying open on her chair a book she had just been reading. It purported to be the experience of a missionary in one of our large cities, and was divided into nine separate stories. These were their titles, copied verbatim on the spot: —

The Infidel.
The Dying Banker.
The Drunkard's Death.
The Miser's Death.
The Hospital.

The Wanderer's Death.

The Dying Shirt-Maker.

The Broken Heart.

The Destitute Poor.

What wonder that my little maid was sad and solemn when she recreated herself with such chronicles as these? What wonder that, like the Scotchman's famous dog, "life was full o' sairiousness" for her, when religion and literature, the two things which should make up the sum of our happiness, had conspired, under the guise of Sunday-school fiction, to destroy her gayety of heart?

THE FÊTE DE GAYANT.

As far as I have ever seen provincial France, it appears to be perpetually *en fête*. Religiously or patriotically, it is always celebrating something; and it does so in a splendid whole-hearted fashion, concentrating all the energy of a town into a few days or a few hours of ardent demonstration. *Les fêtes religieuses* are without doubt the most charming and picturesque; and the smaller the place, the more curious and time-honored the observances. It is wonderful, too, to note the resources of even the poorest community. Auray, with its few straggling streets, is little better than a village; yet here, on the Fête du Sacré Cœur, I saw a procession so beautiful and so admirably organized that it would have done credit to any city of France. Scores of priests and hundreds of weather-beaten men and women moved slowly through the narrow lanes, or knelt before the rude altars that had been erected at every turning. Not a house

in Auray that had not been hung with linen sheets; not a rood of ground that was not strewn with flowers and fresh green leaves. Bands of little girls, dressed in blue and white, surrounded the statue of the Madonna, and the crimson banner of the Sacred Heart was borne by tiny boys, with red sashes around their waists and wreaths of red roses on their curly heads, looking absurdly like Bonfigli's flower-crowned angels. One solemn child personated the infant St. John. He wore a scanty goatskin, and no more. A toy lamb, white and woolly, was tucked under his arm, and a slender cross grasped in his baby hand. By his side walked an equally youthful Jeanne d'Arc, attired in a blue spangled skirt and a steel breastplate, with a helmet, a nodding plume, a drawn sword, and a pair of gauzy wings to indicate that approaching beatification which is the ardent desire of every French Catholic.

"Notre mère, la France, est de Jeanne la fille,"

and she is to be congratulated on so blithely forgetting the unfilial nature of her conduct. At every altar benediction was given to the

kneeling throng, and a regiment of boys beat their drums and sounded their trumpets shrilly to warn those who were too far away for sight that the sacred moment had come. It seemed incredible that so small a place could have supplied so many people, until I remembered what an American is wont to forget, — that in Auray there were no two ways of thinking. Spectators, affected or disaffected, there were none. Everybody old enough and strong enough to walk joined in the procession; just as everybody at Lourdes joined in the great procession of the Fête Dieu, when the hundreds were multiplied to thousands, when the mountain side at dusk seemed on fire with myriads of twinkling tapers, and the pilgrim chant, plaintive, monotonous, and unmusical, was borne by the night winds far away over the quiet valley of the Gave.

On these occasions I have been grateful to the happy accident, or design, that made me a participant in such scenes. But there have been other days when provincial towns *en fête* meant the acme of discomfort for wearied travelers. It was no especial grievance, indeed, that Compiègne should continue to cele-

brate the 14th of July long after it had merged into the 15th, by playing martial airs, and firing off guns directly under my bedroom window. I felt truly that I should have been but little better off elsewhere; for there is not a corner of France, nor a single French dependency, that does not go mad annually with delight because a rabble destroyed one of the finest fortresses in Europe. But it did seem hard that we should reach Amiens just when the combined attractions of the races and a fair had filled that quiet spot with tumult and commotion. Amiens is not a town that takes kindly to excitement. It is contemplative in character, and boisterous gayety sits uneasily upon its tranquil streets. Even the landlady of our very comfortable hotel appeared to recognize and deplore the incongruity of the situation. Her house was full to overflowing; her dining-room could not hold its famished guests; yet, instead of rejoicing, she bewailed the hungry crowds who had wrecked the harmony of her well-ordered inn.

"If madame had only come two days ago," she protested, "madame would then have seen Amiens at its best; and, moreover, she would

have been properly waited on. My servants are trained, they are attentive, they are polite, they would have taken care that madame had everything she required. But now! What, then, does madame think of this so sad disorder?"

Madame assured her she thought the servants were doing all that could be required of mortal men; and, indeed, these nimble creatures fairly flew from guest to guest, and from room to room. I never saw one of them even lapse into a walk. I tried to describe to her the behavior of domestics in our own land, recalling to memory a sudden invasion of one of the Yellowstone Park hotels by a band of famished tourists, — their weary waiting, their humble attitude, their meek appeals for food, and the stolid indifference of the negro waiters to their most urgent needs. But this imperious little Frenchwoman merely held up her hands in horror at such anarchical conduct. A mob of communists engaged in demolishing the cathedral of Amiens would have seemed less terrible to her than a mob of servants refusing to wait swiftly upon hungry travelers. She was so serious in her anxiety for our com-

fort that her mind appeared visibly relieved when, on the second day, we decided that we too were weary of noise and excitement, and would move on that afternoon to Douai. There, at least, we told ourselves, we should find the drowsy quiet we desired. The image of the dull old town — which we had never seen — rose up alluringly before us. We pictured even the station, tranquil and empty like so many stations in rural France, with a leisurely little engine sauntering in occasionally, and a solitary porter roused from his nap, and coming forward, surprised but smiling, to handle our numerous bags. These pretty fancies soothed our nerves and beguiled our idleness until the three hours' trip was over, and Douai was reached at last. Douai! Yes; but Douai in a state of apparent frenzy, with a surging crowd whose uproar could be heard above our engine's shriek, — hundreds of people rushing hither and thither, climbing into cars, clamoring over friends, laughing, shouting, blowing trumpets, and behaving generally in a fashion which made Amiens silent by comparison. For one moment we stood stunned by the noise and confusion; and

then the horrid truth forced itself upon our unwilling minds: Douai was *en fête.*

We made our way through the throng of people into the square outside the station, and took counsel briefly with one another. We were tired, we were hungry, and it was growing late; but should we ignore these melancholy conditions, and push bravely on for Lille? Lille, says Baedeker, has "two hundred thousand inhabitants," and cities of that size have grown too big for play. We thought of the discomforts which probably awaited us at Douai in a meagre inn, crowded with noisy *bourgeois*, and were turning resolutely back, when suddenly there came the sound of drums playing a gay and martial air, and in another minute, surrounded by a clamorous mob, the Sire de Gayant and his family moved slowly into sight.

Thirty feet high was the Sire de Gayant, and his nodding plumes overtopped the humble roofs by which he passed. His steel breastplate glittered in the evening sun; his mighty mace looked like a May-pole; his countenance was grave and stern. The human pygmies by his side betrayed their insignifi-

cance at every step. They ran backward and forward, making all the foolish noises they could. They rode on hobby-horses. They played ridiculous antics. They were but children, after all, gamboling irresponsibly at the feet of their own Titanic toy. Behind the Sire de Gayant came his wife, in brocaded gown, with imposing farthingale and stomacher. Pearls wreathed her hair and fell upon her massive bosom. Earrings a handbreadth in size hung from her ears, and a fan as big as a fire-screen was held lightly by a silver chain. Like Lady Corysande, "her approaching mien was full of majesty;" yet she looked affable and condescending, too, as befitted a dame of parts and noble birth. Her children manifested in their bearing more of pride and less of dignity. There was even something theatrical in the velvet cap and swinging cloak of her only son; and Mademoiselle Gayant held her head erect in conscious complacency, while her long brown ringlets fluttered in the breeze.

> "Of course the village girls
> Who envy me my curls,"

she seemed to murmur as she passed stiffly by.

Happily, however, there was still another member of this ancient family, more popular and more well beloved than all the rest, — Mademoiselle Thérèse, "*la petite Binbin*," who for two hundred years has been the friend and idol of every child in Douai. A sprightly and attractive little girl was Mademoiselle Thérèse, barely eight feet high, and wearing a round cap and spotless pinafore. In her hand she carried a paper windmill, that antique Douai toy with which we see the angels and the Holy Innocents amusing themselves in Bellegambe's beautiful old picture, the Altar-piece of Anchin. She ran hither and thither with uncertain footsteps, pausing now and then to curtsy prettily to some admiring friends in a doorway; and whenever the pressure of the crowd stopped her progress, the little children clamored to be held up in their fathers' arms to kiss her round, smooth cheeks. One by one they were lifted in the air, and one by one I saw them put their arms around la Binbin's neck, and embrace her so heartily that I wondered how she kept herself clean and uncrumpled amid these manifold caresses. As she went by, the last of that

strange procession, we moved after her, without another thought of Lille and its comfortable hotels. Comfort, forsooth! Were we not back in the fifteenth century, when comfort had still to be invented? Was that not the Song of Gayant which the drums were beating so gayly? And who yet ever turned their backs upon Douai when the famous Ranz des Douaisiens was ringing triumphantly in their ears?

For this little French town, smaller than many a ten-year-old city in the West, has an ancient and honorable past; and her martial deeds have been written down on more than one page of her country's history. The Fête de Gayant is old; so old that its origin has been lost in an obscurity which a number of industrious scholars have tried in vain to penetrate.

> "Ce que c'est que Gayant? Ma foi, je n'en sais rien.
> Ce que c'est que Gayant? Nul ne le sait en Flandre."

The popular belief is that a knight of gigantic size fought valorously in behalf of Douai when the city, spent and crippled, made her splendid defense against Louis XI., and that his name is still preserved with gratitude by

the people whom he helped to save. Certain it is that the fête dates from 1479, the year that Louis was repulsed; and whether or not a real Gayant ever stood upon the walls, there is little doubt that the procession celebrates that hard-won victory. But the Church has not been backward in claiming the hero for her own, and identifying him with St. Maurand, the blessed patron of Douai. St. Maurand, it is said, fought for the welfare of his town as St. Iago fought for the glory of Spain; and there is a charming legend to show how keenly he watched over the people who trusted to his care. In 1556, on the night following the feast of the Epiphany, Admiral Coligny planned to surprise the city, which, ignorant of its danger, lay sleeping at the mercy of its foe. But just as St. George, St. Mark, and St. Nicholas aroused the old fisherman, and went out into the storm to do battle with demons for the safety of Venice, so St. Maurand prepared to defeat the crafty assailant of Douai. At midnight he appeared by the bedside of the monk whose duty it was to ring the great bells of St. Amé, and bade him arise and call the brethren to matins.

The monk, failing to recognize the august character of his visitor, protested drowsily that it was too early, and that, after the fatigue and lengthy devotions of the feast, it would be but humanity to allow the monastery another hour of slumber. St. Maurand, however, insisted so sternly and so urgently that the poor lay brother, seeing no other way to rid himself of importunity, arose, stumbled into the belfry, and laid his hands upon the dangling ropes. But hardly had he given them the first faint pull when, with a mighty vibration, the bells swung to and fro as though spirits were hurling them through the air. So furiously were they tossed that the brazen clangor of their tongues rang out into the night with an intensity of menace that awoke every man in Douai to a swift recognition of his peril. Soldiers sprang to arms; citizens swarmed out of their comfortable homes; and while the bells still pealed forth their terrible summons, those who were first at the defenses saw for one instant the blessed St. Maurand standing in shining armor on the ramparts, guarding the city of his adoption as St. Michael guards the hidden gates of paradise.

So the Church will have it that the knight Gayant is no other than the holy son of Adalbald; and as for Madame Gayant and her family, who seem like a questionable encumbrance upon saintship, it is clearly proved that Gayant had neither wife nor child until 1665, when the good people of Douai abruptly ended his cheerful days of celibacy. Indeed, there are historians so lost to all sense of honor and propriety as to insist that this beloved Titan owes his origin neither to Flemish heroism nor to the guardianship of saints, but to the efforts made by the Spanish conquerors of Douai to establish popular pastimes resembling those of Spain. According to these base-minded antiquarians, Gayant was an invention of Charles V., who added a variety of pageants to the yearly procession with which the city celebrated its victory over Louis XI.; and when the Spaniards were finally driven from the soil, the knight remained as a popular hero, vaguely associated with earlier deeds of arms. That he was an object of continual solicitude — and expense — is proven by a number of entries in the archives of Douai. In 1665, seven florins were paid to the five men who

carried him through the streets, and twenty pastars to the two boys who danced before him, to say nothing of an additional outlay of six florins for the white dancing-shoes provided for them. Moreover, this being his wedding year, two hundred and eighty-three florins — a large sum for those days — were spent on Madame Gayant's gown, besides seventeen florins for her wig, and over forty florins for her jewels and other decorations. A wife is ever a costly luxury, but when she chances to be over twenty feet high, her trousseau becomes a matter for serious consideration. In 1715, the price of labor having risen, and the knight's family having increased, it cost thirty-three florins to carry them in procession, Mademoiselle Thérèse, who was then too young to walk, being drawn in a wagon, probably for the first time. The repainting of faces, the repairing of armor, the replacing of lost pearls or broken fans, are all accounted for in these careful annals; and it is through them, also, that we learn how the Church occasionally withdrew her favor from the Sire de Gayant, and even went so far as to place him under a ban. M. Guy de Sève, Bishop of Arras, in

1699, and M. Louis François Marc-Hilaire de Conzié, Bishop of Arras in 1770, were both of the opinion that the fête had grown too secular, not to say licentious in its character, and, in spite of clamorous discontent, the procession was sternly prohibited. But French towns are notably wedded to their idols. Douai never ceased to love and venerate her gigantic knight; and after a time, perhaps through the good offices of St. Maurand, he overcame his enemies, reëstablished his character with the Church, and may be seen to-day, as we had the happiness of seeing him, carried in triumph through those ancient streets that welcomed him four hundred years ago.

The Fête de Gayant is not a brief affair, like Guy Fawkes day or the Fourth of July. It lasts from the 8th of July until the 11th, and is made the occasion of prolonged rejoicing and festivity. In the public square, boys are tilting like knights of old, or playing antiquated games that have descended to them from their forefathers. Greased poles hung with fluttering prizes tempt the unwary; tiny donkeys, harnessed and garlanded with flowers, are led around by children; and a discreet woman in

spangled tights sits languidly on a trapeze, waiting for the sous to be collected before beginning her performance. From this post of vantage she espies us standing on the outskirts of the crowd, aud sends her little son, a pretty child, brave in gilt and tinsel, to beg from us.

As it chances, I have given all my sous to earlier petitioners, and I open my collapsed pocket book to show him how destitute I am. With a swift corresponding gesture he turns his little tin canister upside down, and shakes it plaintively, proving that it is even emptier than my purse. This appeal is irresistible. In the dearth of coppers, a silver coin is found for him, which his mother promptly acknowledges by going conscientiously through the whole of her slender répertoire. Meanwhile, the child chatters fluently with us. He travels all the time, he tells us, and has been to Italy and Switzerland. His father can speak Italian and a little English. He likes the English people best of all, — a compliment to our supposed nationality; they are the richest, most generous, most charming and beautiful ladies in the world. He says this, looking, not at my companions, who in some sort merit

the eulogium, but straight at me, with a robust guile that is startling in its directness. I have given the franc. To me is due the praise. Poor little lad! It must be a precarious and slender income earned by that jaded mother, even in time of fête; for provincial France, though on pleasure bent, hath, like Mrs. Gilpin, a very frugal mind. She does not fling money about with British prodigality, nor consume gallons of beer with German thirst, nor sink her scanty savings in lottery tickets with Italian fatuity. No, she drinks her single glass of wine, or cider, or syrup and water, and looks placidly at all that may be seen for nothing, and experiences the joys of temperance. She knows that her strength lies in husbanding her resources, and that vast are the powers of thrift.

Meanwhile, each day brings its allotted diversions. Gayly decorated little boats are sailing on the Scarpe, and fancying themselves a regatta. Archers are contesting for prizes in the Place St. Amé, where, hundreds of years ago, their forefathers winged their heavy bolts. A *carrousel vélocipédique* is to be followed by a ball; carrier pigeons are being freed in the

Place Carnot; a big balloon is to ascend from the esplanade; and excellent concerts are played every afternoon in the pretty Jardin des Plantes. It is hard to make choice among so many attractions, especially as two days out of the four the Sire de Gayant and his family march through the streets, and draw us irresistibly after them. But we see the archers, and the pigeons, and the balloon, which takes three hours to get ready, and three minutes to be out of sight, carrying away in its car a grizzled aeronaut, and an adventurous young woman who embraces all her friends with dramatic fervor, and unfurls the flag of France as she ascends, to the unutterable admiration of the crowd. We hear a concert, also, sitting comfortably in the shade, and thinking how pleasant it would be to have a glass of beer to help the music along. But the natural affinity, the close and enduring friendship between music and beer which the Germans understand so well, the French have yet to discover. They are learning to drink this noble beverage — in small doses — and to forgive it its Teutonic flavor. I have seen half a dozen men sitting in front of a restaurant at Lille or at Rouen,

each with a tiny glass of beer before him; but I have never beheld it poured generously out to the thunderous accompaniment of a band. Even at Marseilles, where, faithful to destiny, we encountered a musical fête so big and grand that three hotels rejected us, and the cabmen asked five francs an hour, — even amid this tumult of sweet sounds, from which there was no escaping, we failed ignominiously when we sought to hearten ourselves to a proper state of receptivity with beer.

At the Douai concerts no one dreamed of drinking anything. The townspeople sat in decorous little groups under the trees, talking furtively when the loudness of the clarionets permitted them, and reserving their enthusiastic applause for the Chant de Gayant, with which, as in honor bound, each entertainment came to a close. Young girls, charmingly dressed, lingered by their mothers' sides, never even lifting their dark eyes to note the fine self-appreciation of the men who passed them. If they spoke at all, it was in fluttering whispers to one another; if they looked at anything, it was at one another's gowns. They are seldom pretty, these sallow daughters of France; yet,

like Gautier's Carmen, their ugliness has in it a grain of salt from that ocean out of which Venus rose. No girls in the whole wide world lead duller lives than theirs. They have neither the pleasures of a large town nor the freedom of a little one. They may not walk with young companions, even of their own sex. They may not so much as to go church alone. Novels, romances, poetry, plays, operas, all things that could stimulate their imaginations and lift them out of the monotonous routine of life, are sternly prohibited. Perpetual espionage forbids the healthy growth of character and faculty, which demand some freedom and solitude for development. The strict seclusion of a convent school is exchanged for a colorless routine of small duties and smaller pleasures. And yet these young girls, bound hand and foot by the narrowest conventionalities, are neither foolish nor insipid. A dawning intelligence, finer than humored precocity can ever show, sits on each tranquil brow. When they speak, it is with propriety and grace. In the restrained alertness of their brown eyes, in their air of simplicity and self-command, in the instinctive elegance of their

dress, one may read, plainly written, the subtle possibilities of the future. That offensive and meaningless phrase, the woman problem, is seldom heard in France, where all problems solve themselves more readily than elsewhere. Midway between the affectionate subservience of German wives and daughters and the gay arrogance of our own, with more self-reliance than the English, and a clearer understanding of their position than all the other three have ever grasped, Frenchwomen find little need to wrangle for privileges which they may easily command. The resources of tact and good taste are well-nigh infinite, and to them is added a capacity for administration and affairs which makes the French gentleman respect his wife's judgment, and places the French shopkeeper at the mercy of his spouse. In whatever walk of life these young provincial girls are destined to tread, they will have no afflicting doubts as to the limits of their usefulness. They will probably never even pause to ask themselves what men would do without them, nor to point a lesson vainglori-ously from the curious fact that Douai gave Gayant a wife.

CAKES AND ALE.

"The Muses smell of wine."

It is with reasonable hesitation that I venture upon a theme which no pleading words of Horace can ever make acceptable to a nineteenth-century conscience. The world at present is full of people to whom drinking-songs are inseparably associated with drinking habits, and drinking habits with downright drunkenness; and it would be hard to persuade them that the sweet Muses have never smiled upon the joyless bestiality which wrecks the lives of men. Even in days long past, when consciences had still to be developed, and poets sang that wine was made to scatter the cares of earth, the crowning grace of self-control was always the prize of youth. When little Aristion, her curls crowned with roses, drained the contents of three golden goblets before beginning her dance, she was probably as careful to avoid unseemly intoxication as is the college athlete of to-day train-

ing for the gentle game of football; yet none the less her image is abhorrent to our peculiar morality, which can ill endure such irresponsible gayety of heart. The perpetual intrusion of ethics into art has begotten a haunting anxiety lest perchance for one glad half-hour we should forget that it is our duty to be serious. I had this lesson forcibly impressed upon me a few years ago when I wrote a harmless essay upon war-songs, and a virtuous critic reminded me, with tearful earnestness, that while there was nothing really hurtful in such poetry, it would be better far if I turned my attention to the nobler contest which Lady Somerset was then waging so valiantly against intemperance.

Now, to the careless mind, it does not at first sight appear that war-songs, considered solely in their literary aspect, have any especial connection with intemperance. I am not even prepared to admit that drinking-songs can be held responsible for drink. When Englishmen began to cultivate habits of consistent insobriety, they ceased to sing of wine. The eighteenth century witnessed, not only the steady increase of drunkenness in every

walk of life, but also its willful and ostentatious defense. From the parson to the ploughman, from the peer to the poacher, all classes drank deeply, and with the comfortable consciousness that they were playing manly parts. It was one of the first lessons taught to youth, and fathers encouraged their sons — vainly sometimes, as in the case of Horace Walpole — to empty as many bottles as their steady hands could hold. "A young fellow had better be thrice drunk in one day," says honest Sir Hildebrand to Frank Osbaldistone, "than sneak sober to bed like a Presbyterian." And there is true paternal pride in the contrast the squire draws between this strange, abstemious relative from town and his own stalwart, country-bred boys, "who would have been all as great milksops as yourself, Nevey," he heartily declares, "if I had not nursed them, as one may say, on the toast and tankard."

Nevertheless, it was not in the eighteenth century, with its deep potations, and its nightly collapses of squire and squireen under their mahogany tables, that the gay English drinking-songs were written. The eighteenth-cen-

tury drinker had no time and no breath to waste in singing. Burns, indeed, a rare exception, gave to Scotland those reckless verses which Mr. Arnold found "insincere" and "unsatisfactory," and from which more austere critics have shrunk in manifest disquiet. Perhaps the reproach of insincerity is not altogether undeserved. There are times when Burns seems to exult over the moral discomfort of his reader, and this is not the spirit in which good love-songs, or good war-songs, or good drinking-songs are written. Yet who shall approach the humor of that transfigured proverb which Solomon would not have recognized for his own; or the honest exultation of these two lines: —

> "O Whiskey! soul o' plays an' pranks!
> Accept a bardie's gratefu' thanks!"

or, best of all, the genial gayety of "Willie Brew'd a Peck o' Maut," — sovereign, says Mr. Saintsbury, of the poet's Bacchanalian verse? —

> "O, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut,
> And Rob and Allan came to pree;
> Three blither hearts, that lee-lang night,
> Ye wadna find in Christendie."

Here at last is the true ring, without bravado, without conceit, without bestiality, — only the splendid high spirits, the foolish, unhesitating happiness of youth: —

> "It is the moon, I ken her horn,
> That 's blinkin' in the lift sae hie;
> She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
> But, by my sooth, she 'll wait a wee!"

When Burns sings in this strain, even those who wear the blue ribbon may pause and listen kindly, remembering, if they like, before leaving the world of "Scotch wit, Scotch religion, and Scotch drink," so repellent to Mr. Arnold's pitiless good taste, how another jovial north-countryman has defined for them the inestimable virtue of temperance. "Nae man shall ever stop a nicht in my house," says the Ettrick Shepherd, "without partakin' o' the best that 's in it, be 't meat or drink; and if the coof canna drink three or four tummlers or jugs o' toddy, he has nae business in the Forest. Now, sir, I ca' that no an abstemious life, — for why should any man be abstemious? — but I ca' 't a temperate life, and o' a' the virtues, there 's nane mair friendly to man than Temperance."

Friendly indeed! Why, viewed in this genial light, she is good-fellowship itself, and hardly to be distinguished from the smiling nymph whom Horace saw in the greenwood, learning attentively the strains dictated to her by the vine-crowned god of wine.

The best of the English drinking-songs were written by the dramatists of the seventeenth century, men who trolled out their vigorous sentiments, linked sweetly together in flowing verse, without the smallest thought or fear of shocking anybody. Frankly indecorous, they invite the whole wide world to drink with them, to empty the brimming tankard passed from hand to hand, and to reel home through the frosty streets, where the watchman grins at their unsteady steps, and quiet sleepers, awakened from dull dreams, echo with drowsy sympathy the last swelling cadence of their uproarious song. Where there is no public sentiment to defy, even Bacchanalian rioters and Bacchanalian verses cease to be defiant. What admirable good temper and sincerity in Fletcher's generous importunity!

> "Drink to-day, and drown all sorrow,
> You shall perhaps not do it to-morrow:

Best, while you have it, use your breath;
There is no drinking after death.

"Then let us swill, boys, for our health,
Who drinks well, loves the commonwealth.
And he that will to bed go sober
Falls with the leaf still in October."

Upon this song successive changes have been rung, until now its variations are bewildering, and to it we owe the ever popular and utterly indefensible glee roared out for generations by many a lusty tavern chorus: —

"He who goes to bed, and goes to bed sober,
Falls as the leaves do, and dies in October;
But he who goes to bed, and goes to bed mellow,
Lives as he ought to do, and dies an honest fellow."

The most affectionate solicitude is continually manifested by seventeenth-century poets lest perchance unthinking mortals should neglect or overlook their opportunities of drinking, and so forfeit their full share of pleasure in a pleasant world.

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,"

is as much the motto of the drinker as of the lover, and the mutability of life forever warns him against wasting its flying moments in unprofitable soberness.

"Not long youth lasteth,
And old age hasteth.

"All things invite us
Now to delight us,"

is the Elizabethan rendering of Father William's counsel; and the hospitable ghost in Fletcher's "Lovers' Progress," who, being dead, must know whereof he speaks, conjures his guests to

"Drink apace, while breath you have,
You 'll find but cold drink in the grave."

Apart from life's brevity and inconstancy, there is always the incentive of patriotism and national pride summoning the reveler to deep and ever deeper potations. It is thus he proves himself a true son of the soil, a loyal and law-abiding Englishman.

"We 'll drink off our liquor while we can stand,
And hey for the honour of Old England!"

sang the Devonshire harvesters two hundred years ago, connecting in some beery fashion the glory of their native isle with the gallons of home-brewed ale they consumed so cheerfully in her name; and the same sentiment is more intelligibly embodied in that graceless

song of Shadwell's which establishes conclusively the duty of an honest citizen and taxpayer: —

> "The king's most faithful subjects, we
> In service are not dull,
> We drink to show our loyalty,
> And make his coffers full.
> Would all his subjects drink like us,
> We 'd make him richer far,
> More powerful and more prosperous
> Than Eastern monarchs are."

It may be noted, by way of illustration, that Dryden, in his "Vindication of the Duke of Guise," remarks somewhat vindictively that the only service Shadwell could render the king was to increase his revenue by drinking.

Finally, in England, as in Greece and Rome, black care sat heavily by the hearths of men; and English singers, following the examples of Horace and Anacreon, called upon wine to drown the unwelcome guest. "Fortune 's a jade!" they cried with Beaumont's Yeoman, but courage and strong drink will bid the hussy stand. Davenant echoed the sentiment defiantly in his mad round,

> "Come, boys! a health, a health, a double health,
> To those who 'scape from care by shunning wealth;"

and Ford gave the fullest expression to the gay laws of Sans Souci in his drinking-song in "The Sun's Darling:"—

"Cast away care; he that loves sorrow
Lengthens not a day, nor can buy to-morrow;
Money is trash, and he that will spend it,
Let him drink merrily, Fortune will send it.

"Pots fly about, give us more liquor,
Brothers of a rout, our brains will flow quicker;
Empty the cask; score up, we care not;
Fill all the pots again; drink on, and spare not."

To pause in the generous swing of verses like these, and call to mind Mrs. Jameson's refined and chilling verdict, "It is difficult to sympathize with English drinking-songs," is like stepping from the sunshine of life into the shaded drawing-room of genteel society. Difficult to sympathize! Why, we may drink nothing stronger than tea and Apollinaris water all our lives; yet none the less the mad music of Elizabethan song will dance merrily in our hearts, and give even to us our brief hour of illogical, unreasonable happiness. What had the author of "The Diary of an Ennuyée" to do with that robust age when ennui had still to be invented? What was

she to think of the indecorous Bacchanalian catches of Lyly and Middleton, or of the uncompromising vulgarity of that famous song from "Gammer Gurton's Needle," or of the unseemly jollity of Cleveland's tavern-bred, tavern-sung verse?

"Come hither, Apollo's bouncing girl,
And in a whole Hippocrene of Sherry,
Let 's drink a round till our brains do whirl,
Tuning our pipes to make ourselves merry;
A Cambridge lass, Venus-like, born of the froth
Of an old half-filled jug of barley-broth,
She, she is my mistress, her suitors are many,
But she 'll have a square-cap if e'er she have any."

Yet after discarding these ribald songs, with which refined femininity is not presumed to sympathize, there still remain such charming verses as Ben Jonson's

"Swell me a bowl with lusty wine,
Till I may see the plump Lyæus swim
Above the brim.
I drink as I would write,
In flowing measure, filled with flame and sprite."

Or, if this be too scholarly and artificial, there are the far more beautiful lines of Beaumont and Fletcher: —

"God Lyæus, ever young,
Ever honoured, ever sung,
Stained with blood of lusty grapes;
In a thousand antic shapes
Dance upon the maze's brim,
In the crimson liquor swim;
From thy plenteous hand divine
Let a river run with wine;
God of youth, let this day here
Enter neither care nor fear."

Or we may follow where Shakespeare leads, and sing unhesitatingly with him: —

"Come, thou monarch of the vine,
Plumpy Bacchus with pink eyne!
In thy vats our cares be drowned,
With thy grapes our hairs be crowned,
Cup us, till the world go round —
Cup us, till the world go round."

There is only one drinking-song — a seventeenth-century drinking-song, too — with which I find it difficult to sympathize, and that is the well-known and often-quoted verse of Cowley's, beginning, —

"The thirsty earth drinks up the rain,
And thirsts and gapes for drink again."

Its strained and borrowed conceits which have lost all charm in the borrowing, are not in accordance with anything so natural and simple

as conviviality. Men may give a thousand foolish reasons for loving, and feel their folly still unjustified; but drinking needs no such steel-forged chain of arguments. Moreover Cowley's last lines, —

> "Fill all the glasses up, for why
> Should every creature drink but I?
> Why, man of morals, tell me why?"

give to the poem an air of protest which destroys it. The true drinking-song does not concern itself in the least with the "man of morals," nor with his verdict. And precisely because it is innocent of any conscious offense against morality, because it has not considered the moral aspect of the case at all, it makes its gay and graceless appeal to hearts wearied with the perpetual consideration of social reforms and personal responsibility. "Be merry, friends!" it says in John Heywood's homely phrase, —

> "Mirth salveth sorrows most soundly:"

and this "short, sweet text" is worth a solid sermon in days when downright merriment is somewhat out of favor.

The poet who of all others seems least aware

that life has burdens, not only to be carried when sent, but to be rigorously sought for when withheld, is Robert Herrick. He is the true singer of Cakes and Ale, or rather of Curds and Cream; for in that pleasant Devonshire vicarage, where no faint echo of London streets or London taverns rouses him from rural felicity, his heart turns easily to country feasts and pastimes. It is true he rejoices mightily in

> "wassails fine,
> Not made of ale, but spicèd wine,"

yet even these innocent carousals are of Arcadian simplicity. He loves, too, the fare of Devon farmers, — the clotted cream, the yellow butter, honey, and baked pears, and fresh-laid eggs. He loves the Twelfth-Night cake, with "joy-sops," — alluring word, — the "wassail-bowl" of Christmas, the "Whitsun ale," the almond paste sacred to wedding-rites, the "bucksome meat and capring wine" that crown the New Year's board, and, above all, the plenteous bounty of the Harvest Home. In his easy, unvexed fashion, he is solicitous that we, his readers, should learn, not "to labor and to wait," but to be idle and to enjoy,

while idleness and joy still gild the passing day.

> "Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
> Come, my Corinna, come, let 's goe a Maying,"

is the gay doctrine preached by this unclerical clergyman. Even when he remembers perforce that he *is* a clergyman, and turns his heart to prayer, this is the thanksgiving that rises sweetly to his lips: —

> "'T is Thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
> With guiltless mirth,
> And giv'st me wassail-bowls to drink,
> Spiced to the brink."

Had the patronage of the Church never been extended to Herrick, and had he lived on in London, the friend of Jonson, and Selden, and Fletcher, and kind, witty Bishop Corbet, we should have lost the most charming pastoral vignettes ever flung like scattered May-blossoms into literature; but we should have gained drinking-songs such as the world has never known, — songs whose reckless music would lure us even now from our watchful propriety as easily as great Bacchus lured that wise beast Cerberus, who gave his doggish

heart and wagged his doggish tail, gentle and innocent as a milk-fed puppy, when he saw the god of wine.

The close of the seventeenth century witnessed a revolution in English poetry, and the great "coming event" of Queen Anne's Augustan age threw its shadow far before it, — a shadow of reticence and impersonality. People drank more and more, but they said less and less about it. Even in the reign of Charles II., though convivial songs were written by the score, they had lost the ring of earlier days; and we need only read a few of the much-admired verses of Tom D'Urfey to be convinced that periods of dissolute living do not necessarily give birth to sincere and reckless song. In the following century, sincerity and recklessness were equally out of date. Now and then a cheerful outburst, like the drinking-song from Congreve's "Way of the World," illumines our arid path, and shows the source whence Thackeray drew his inspiration for those delightful verses in "Rebecca and Rowena" concerning the relative pleasures of Pope and Sultan. Later on, Sheridan gave us his glee in "The Duenna,"

and his ever popular toast in "The School for Scandal," which is not properly a drinking-song at all. Then there came a time when the spurious conviviality of Barry Cornwall passed for something fine and genuine, and when Thomas Haynes Bayly "gave to minstrelsy the attributes of intellect, and reclaimed even festive song from vulgarity." And at precisely this period, when a vapid elegance pervaded the ditties warbled forth in refined drawing-rooms, and when Moore alone, of all the popular song-writers, held the secret of true music in his heart, Thomas Love Peacock wrote for respectable and sentimental England five of the very best drinking-songs ever given to an ungrateful world. No thought of possible disapprobation vexed his soul's serenity. He lived in the nineteenth century, as completely uncontaminated by nineteenth-century ideals as though Robinson Crusoe's desert island had been his resting-place. The shafts of his good-tempered ridicule were leveled at all that his countrymen were striving to prove sacred and beneficial. His easy laugh rang out just when everybody was most strenuous in the cause of progress. His wit

was admirably calculated to make people uncomfortable and dissatisfied. And in addition to these disastrous qualities, he apparently thought it natural and reasonable and right that English gentlemen — sensible, educated, *married* English gentlemen — should sit around their dinner-tables until the midnight hour, drinking wine and singing songs with boyish and scandalous joviality.

The songs he offered for these barbarian entertainments are perfect in character and form. Harmless mirth, a spirit of generous good-fellowship, a clean and manly heart disarm, or should disarm, all moral judgment, while the grace and vigor of every line leave the critic powerless to complain. "Hail to the Headlong," and "A Heel-tap! a Heel-tap!" are the poet's earliest tributes at the shrine of Bacchus. He gained a fuller insight and an ampler charity before he laid down his pen. His three best poems, which cannot possibly be omitted from such a paper as this, show how time mellowed him, as it mellows wine. We mark the ripening power, the surer touch, the kinder outlook on a troubled world. Peacock was but twenty-nine when he wrote

"Headlong Hall." He was thirty-two when "Melincourt" was given to the world, and in it his inimitable "Ghosts:" —

"In life three ghostly friars were we,
And now three friendly ghosts we be.
Around our shadowy table placed,
The spectral bowl before us floats:
With wine that none but ghosts can taste
We wash our unsubstantial throats.
Three merry ghosts — three merry ghosts — three merry ghosts are we:
Let the ocean be port, and we 'll think it good sport
To be laid in that Red Sea.

"With songs that jovial spectres chant,
Our old refectory still we haunt.
The traveler hears our midnight mirth:
'O list,' he cries, 'the haunted choir!
The merriest ghost that walks the earth
Is now the ghost of a ghostly friar.'
Three merry ghosts — three merry ghosts — three merry ghosts are we:
Let the ocean be port, and we 'll think it good sport
To be laid in that Red Sea."

The next year, in "Nightmare Abbey," appeared the best known and the most admirable of all his glees, a song which holds its own even in an alien world, which is an admitted favorite with singing societies, and which we have all of us heard from time to time chanted

decorously by a row of sedate and serious gentlemen in correct evening dress: —

"Seamen three! what men be ye?
Gotham's three wise men we be.
Whither in your bowl so free?
To rake the moon from out the sea.
The bowl goes trim, the moon doth shine,
And our ballast is old wine;
And your ballast is old wine.

"Who art thou so fast adrift?
I am he they call Old Care.
Here on board we will thee lift.
No: I may not enter there.
Wherefore so? 'T is Jove's decree
In a bowl Care may not be;
In a bowl Care may not be.

"Fear ye not the waves that roll?
No: in charmèd bowl we swim.
What the charm that floats the bowl?
Water may not pass the brim.
The bowl goes trim, the moon doth shine,
And our ballast is old wine;
And your ballast is old wine."

Last, but by no means least, in "Crotchet Castle," we have a drinking-song at once the kindest and the most scandalous that the poet ever wrote, — a song which is the final, definite, unrepentant expression of heterodoxy: —

"If I drink water while this doth last,
May I never again drink wine;
For how can a man, in his life of a span,
Do anything better than dine?
We 'll dine and drink, and say if we think
That anything better can be;
And when we have dined, wish all mankind
May dine as well as we.

"And though a good wish will fill no dish,
And brim no cup with sack,
Yet thoughts will spring as the glasses ring
To illumine our studious track.
O'er the brilliant dreams of our hopeful schemes
The light of the flask shall shine;
And we 'll sit till day, but we 'll find the way
To drench the world with wine."

With Peacock the history of English drinking-songs is practically closed, and it does not seem likely to be reopened in the immediate future. Any approach to the forbidden theme is met by an opposition too strenuous and universal to be lightly set aside. We may not love nor value books more than did our great-grandfathers, but we have grown to curiously overrate their moral influence, to fancy that the passions of men and women are freed or restrained by snatches of song, or the bits of conversation they read in novels. Accord-

ingly, a rigorous censorship is maintained over the ethics of literature, with the rather melancholy result that we hear of little else. Trivialities have ceased to be trivial in a day of microscopic research, and there is no longer anything not worth consideration. We all remember what happened when Lord Tennyson wrote his "Hands all Round:" —

> "First pledge our Queen, this solemn night,
> Then drink to England, every guest."

It is by no means a ribald or rollicking song. On the contrary, there is something dutiful, as well as justifiable, in the serious injunction of its chorus: —

> "Hands all round!
> God the traitor's hope confound!
> To this great cause of Freedom, drink, my friends,
> And the great name of England, round and round."

Yet such was the scandal given to the advocates of temperance by this patriotic poem, and so lamentable were the reproaches which ensued, that the "Saturday Review," playing for once the unwonted part of peacemaker, "soothed and sustained the agitated frame" of British sensitiveness by reminding her that the laureate had given no hint as to what

liquor should be drunk in the cause of freedom, and that he probably had it in his mind to toast

> "the great name of England, round and round,"

in milk or mineral waters. The more recent experience of Mr. Rudyard Kipling suggests forcibly the lesson taught our "Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table," when he sent his little poem to a "festive and convivial" celebration, and had it returned with "some slight changes" to suit the sentiments of the committee: —

> "In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,
> Down, down with the tyrant that masters us all!"

Hood, a good-tempered mocker always, took note of the popular prejudice in his hospitable lines by a "Member of a Temperance Society:" —

> "Come, pass round the pail, boys, and give it no quarter,
> Drink deep, and drink oft, and replenish your jugs."

And Longfellow, with his usual directness, went straight to the hearts of his readers when, in simple seriousness, he filled his antique pitcher, and sang his "Drinking Song" in praise of water.

"Come, old friend, sit down and listen!
As it passes thus between us,
How its wavelets laugh and glisten
In the head of old Silenus!"

This was the verse which New England, and Mother England too, stood ready to applaud. Every era has its cherished virtues, and when the order changes, the wise do well to change with it as speedily as they can. Once there was a jolly old playwright named Cratinus, who died of a broken heart on seeing some Lacedæmonian soldiers fracture a cask of wine, and let it run to waste. He is mentioned kindly by ancient writers, but Peacock is the last man to fling him a word of sympathy. Once there was a time when Chaucer received from England's king the grant of a pitcher of wine daily in the port of London. What poet or public servant now has, or hopes to have, such mark of royal favor? Once Charles I. gave to Ben Jonson, as poet laureate, one hundred pounds a year, and a tierce of Spanish Canary. No such generous drink comes now from Queen Victoria to lend sparkle and vivacity to Mr. Austin's verse. Once Dr. Johnson, "the real primate,

the soul's teacher of all England," says Carlyle, declared roundly and without shocking anybody, "Brandy, sir, is the drink for heroes." It is not thus that primates and teachers of any land now hearten their wavering disciples. Once the generous publishers of "Marmion" sent Scott a hogshead of fine claret to mark their appreciation of his verse. It is not in this graceful fashion that authors now receive their tokens of good will. The jovial past is dead, quite dead, we keep repeating sternly; yet its merry ghost smiles at us broadly, in no way abashed by our frowns and disapprobation. A friendly ghost it is, haunting the secret chambers of our hearts with laughter instead of groans, and echoes of old songs in place of clanking chains, — a companionable ghost, with brave tales to tell, and jests to ease our pain, a word of wisdom when we have wit to listen, a word of comfort when we have time to heed.

> "Troll the bowl, the nut-brown bowl,
> And here, kind mate, to thee!
> Let 's sing a dirge for Saint Hugh's soul.
> And drown it merrily."

OLD WINE AND NEW.

Readers of "Old Mortality" will perhaps remember that when Graham of Claverhouse escorts Henry Morton as a prisoner to Edinburgh, he asks that estimable and unfortunate young non-conformist if he has ever read Froissart. Morton, who was probably the last man in Scotland to derive any gratification from the Chronicles, answers that he has not. "I have half a mind to contrive you should have six months' imprisonment," says the undaunted Claverhouse, "in order to procure you that pleasure. His chapters inspire me with more enthusiasm than even poetry itself. And the noble canon, with what true chivalrous feeling he confines his beautiful expressions of sorrow to the death of the gallant and high-bred knight, of whom it was a pity to see the fall, such was his loyalty to his king, pure faith to his religion, hardihood towards his enemy, and fidelity to his lady-love! Ah, benedicite! how he will mourn

over the fall of such a pearl of knighthood, be it on the side he happens to favor or on the other! But truly, for sweeping from the face of the earth some few hundreds of villain churls, who are born but to plough it, the high-born and inquisitive historian has marvelous little sympathy"

I should like, out of my affection for the Chronicles, to feel that Sir Walter overstated the case when he put these cheerful words into the mouth of Dundee; but it is vain to deny that Froissart, living in a darkened age, was as indifferent to the fate of the rank and file as if he had been a great nineteenth-century general. To be sure, the rank and file were then counted by the hundreds rather than by the thousands, and it took years of continuous warfare to kill as many soldiers as perished in one of our modern battles. Moreover, the illuminating truth that Jack is as good as his master — by help of which we all live now in such striking brotherhood and amity — had not then dawned upon a proud and prejudiced world. Fighting was the grand business of life, and that Jack did not fight as well as his master was a fact

equally apparent to those who made history and to those who wrote it. If the English archers, the French men-at-arms, and the Breton lances could be trusted to stand the shock of battle, the "lusty varlets," who formed the bulk of every army, were sure to run away; and the "commonalty" were always ready to open their gates and deliver up their towns to every fresh new-comer. When Philip of Navarre was entreated to visit Paris, then in a state of tumult and rebellion, and was assured that the merchants and the mob held him in equal affection, he resolutely declined their importunities, concluding that to put his faith in princes was, on the whole, less dangerous than to confide it in the people. "In commonalties," observed this astute veteran, "there is neither dependence nor union, save in the destruction of all things good." "What can a base-born man know of honor?" asks Froissart coldly. "His sole wish is to enrich himself. He is like the otter, which, entering a pond, devours all the fish therein."

Now, if history, as Professor Seeley teaches us, should begin with a maxim and end with a moral, here are maxims and morals in abun-

dance, albeit they may have lost their flavor for an altruistic age. For no one of the sister Muses has lent herself so unreservedly to the demands of an exacting generation as Clio, who, shorn of her splendor, sits spectacled before a dusty table strewn with Acts of Parliament and Acts of Congress, and forgets the glories of the past in the absorbing study of constitutions. She traces painfully the successive steps by which the sovereign power has passed from the king to the nobles, from the nobles to the nation, and from the nation to the mob, and asks herself interesting but fruitless questions as to what is coming next. She has been divorced from literature, — "mere literature," as Professor Seeley contemptuously phrases it, — and wedded to science, that grim but amorous lord whose harem is tolerably full already, but who lusts perpetually for another bride. If, like Briseis, she looks backward wistfully, she is at once reminded that it is no part of her present duty to furnish recreation to grateful and happy readers, but that her business lies in drawing conclusions from facts already established, and providing a saddened world with

wise speculations on political science, based upon historic certainties. Her safest lessons, Professor Seeley tells her warningly, are conveyed in "Blue Books and other statistics," with which, indeed, no living man can hope to recreate himself; and her essential outgrowths are "political philosophy, the comparative study of legal institutions, political economy, and international law," a witches' brew with which few living men would care to meddle. It is even part of his severe discipline to strip her of the fair words and glittering sentences with which her suitors have sought for centuries to enhance her charms, and "for the beauty of drapery to substitute the beauty of the nude figure." Poor shivering Muse, with whom Shakespeare once dallied, and of whom great Homer sang! Never again shall she be permitted to inspire the genius that enthralls the world. Never again shall "mere literature" carry her name and fame into the remotest corners of the globe. She who once told us in sonorous sentences "how great projects were executed, great advantages gained, and great calamities averted," is now sent into studious retirement, denied

the adornments of style, forbidden the companionship of heroes, and requested to occupy herself industriously with Blue Books and the growth of constitutions. I know nothing more significant than Professor Seeley's warning to modern historians not to resemble Tacitus, — of which there seems but little danger, — unless, indeed, it be the complacency with which a patriotic and very popular American critic congratulates himself and us on the felicity of having plenty of young poets of our own, who do not in the least resemble Wordsworth, or Shelley, or Keats.

Yet when we take from history all that gives it color, vivacity, and charm, we lose perchance more than our mere enjoyment, — though that be a heavy forfeiture, — more than the pleasant hours spent in the storied past. Even so stern a master as Mr. Lecky is fain to admit that these obsolete narratives, which once called themselves histories, "gave insight into human character, breathed noble sentiments, rewarded and stimulated noble actions, and kindled high patriotic feeling by their strong appeals to the imagination." This was no unfruitful labor, and until we

remember that man does not live by parliamentary rule nor by accuracy of information, but by the power of his own emotions and the strength of his own self-control, we can be readily mistaken as to the true value of his lessons. "A nation with whom sentiment is nothing," observes Mr. Froude, "is on its way to become no nation at all;" and it has been well said that Nelson's signal to his fleet at Trafalgar, that last pregnant and simple message sent in the face of death, has had as much practical effect upon the hearts and the actions of Englishmen in every quarter of the globe, in every circumstance of danger and adventure, as seven eighths of the Acts of Parliament that decorate the statute-book. Yet Dr. Bright, in a volume of more than fourteen hundred pages, can find no room for an incident which has become a living force in history. He takes pains to omit, in his lukewarm account of the battle, the one thing that was best worth the telling.

It has become a matter of such pride with a certain school of modern historians to be gray and neutral, accurate in petty details, indifferent to great men, cautious in praise or

blame, and as lifeless as mathematicians, that a gleam of color or a flash of fire is apt to be regarded with suspicion. Yet color is not necessarily misleading; and that keen, warm grasp of a subject which gives us atmosphere as well as facts, interest as well as information, comes nearer to the veiled truth than a catalogue of correct dates and chillingly narrated incidents. It is easy for Mr. Gardiner to denounce Clarendon's "well-known carelessness about details whenever he has a good story to tell;" but what has the later historian ever said to us that will dwell in our hearts, and keep alive our infatuations and our antipathies, as do some of these condemned tales? Nay, even Mr. Gardiner's superhuman coldness in narrating such an event as the tragic death of Montrose has not saved him from at least one inaccuracy. "Montrose, in his scarlet cassock, was hanged at the Grassmarket," he says, with frigid terseness. But Montrose, as it chances, was hanged at the city cross in the High Street, midway between the Tolbooth and the Tron Church. Even the careless and highly colored Clarendon knew this, though Sir Walter Scott, it must

be admitted, did not; but, after all, the exact point in Edinburgh where Montrose was hanged is of no vital importance to anybody. What is important is that we should feel the conflicting passions of that stormy time, that we should regard them with equal sanity and sympathy, and that the death of Montrose should have for us more significance than it appears to have for Mr. Gardiner. Better Froissart's courtly lamentations over the death of every gallant knight than this studied indifference to the sombre stories which history has inscribed for us on her scroll.

For the old French chronicler would have agreed cordially with Landor: "We might as well, in a drama, place the actors behind the scenes, and listen to the dialogue there, as, in a history, push back valiant men." Froissart is enamored of valor wherever he finds it; and he shares Carlyle's reverence not only for events, but for the controlling forces which have moulded them. "The history of mankind," says Carlyle, about whose opinions there is seldom any room for doubt, "is the history of its great men;" and Froissart, whose knowledge is of that narrow and

intimate kind which comes from personal association, finds everything worth narrating that can serve to illustrate the brilliant pageant of life. Nor are his methods altogether unlike Carlyle's. He is a sturdy hero-worshiper, who yet never spares his heroes, believing that when all is set down truthfully and without excuses, those strong and vivid qualities which make a man a leader among men will of themselves claim our homage and admiration. What Cromwell is to Carlyle, what William of Orange is to Macaulay, what Henry VIII. is to Froude, Gaston Phœbus, Count de Foix, is to Froissart. But not for one moment does he assume the tactics of either Macaulay or of Froude, coloring with careful art that which is dubious, and softening or concealing that which is irredeemably bad. Just as Carlyle paints for us Cromwell, — warts and all, — telling us in plain words his least amiable and estimable traits, and intimating that he loves him none the less for these most human qualities, so Froissart tells us unreservedly all that has come to his knowledge concerning the Count de Foix. Thus it appears that this paragon of knighthood virtually banished his

wife, kept his cousin, the Viscount de Châteaubon, a close captive until he paid forty thousand francs ransom, imprisoned his only son on a baseless suspicion of treason, and actually slew the poor boy by his violence, though without intention, and to his own infinite sorrow and remorse. Worse than all this, he beguiled with friendly messages his cousin, Sir Peter Arnaut de Béarn, the commander and governor of Lourdes, to come to his castle of Orthès, and then, under his own roof-tree, stabbed his guest five times, and left him to die miserably of his wounds in a dungeon, because Sir Peter refused to betray the trust confided to him, and deliver up to France the strong fortress of Lourdes, which he held valiantly for the king of England.

Now, Froissart speaks his mind very plainly concerning this base deed, softening no detail, and offering no word of extenuation or acquittal; but none the less the Count de Foix is to him the embodiment of knightly courtesy and valor, and he describes with ardor every personal characteristic, every trait, and every charm that wins both love and reverence. "Although I have seen many kings

and princes, knights and others," he writes, "I have never beheld any so handsome, whether in limbs and shape or in countenance, which was fair and ruddy, with gray, amorous eyes that gave delight whenever he chose to express affection. He was so perfectly formed that no one could praise him too much. He loved earnestly the things he ought to love, and hated those which it was becoming him to hate. He was a prudent knight, full of enterprise and wisdom. He had never any men of abandoned character about him, reigned wisely, and was constant in his devotions. To speak briefly and to the point, the Count de Foix was perfect in person and in mind; and no contemporary prince could be compared with him for sense, honor, or liberality."

In good truth, this despotic nobleman illustrated admirably the familiar text, "When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things which he possesseth are in peace." If he ruled his vassals severely and taxed them heavily, he protected them from all outside interference or injury. None might despoil their homes, nor pass the boundaries of Béarn and Foix, without paying honestly for all that

was required. At a time when invading armies and the far more terrible "free companies" pillaged the country, until the fair fields of France lay like a barren land, the Count de Foix suffered neither English nor French, Gascon nor Breton, to set foot within his territories, until assurance had been given that his people should suffer no harm. He lived splendidly, and gave away large sums of money wherever he had reason to believe that his interests or his prestige would be strengthened by such generosity; but no parasite, male or female, shared in his magnificent bounty. Clear-headed, cold-hearted, vigilant, astute, liberal, and inexorable, he guarded his own, and sovereigns did him honor. His was no humane nor tranquil record; yet judging him by the standards of his own time and place, by the great good as well as by the lesser evil that he wrought, we are fain to echo Froissart's rapturous words, "It is a pity such a one should ever grow old and die."

The earlier part of the Chronicles is compiled from the "Vrayes Chroniques" of Jean le Bel, Canon of St. Lambert's at Liège. Froissart tells us so plainly, and admits that

he made free use of the older narrative as far as it could serve him; afterwards relying for information on the personal recollections of knights, squires, and men-at-arms who had witnessed or had taken part in the invasions, wars, battles, skirmishes, treaties, tournaments, and feasts which made up the stirring tale of fourteenth-century life. To gain this knowledge, he traveled far and wide, attaching himself to one court and one patron after another, and indefatigably seeking those soldiers of distinction who had served in many lands, and could tell him the valorous deeds of which he so ardently loved to hear. In long, leisurely journeys, in lonely castles and populous cities, in summer days and winter nights, he gathered and fitted together — loosely enough — the motley fabric of his tale.

This open-air method of collecting material can hardly be expected to commend itself to modern historians; and it is surely not necessary for Mr. Green or any other careful scholar to tell us seriously that Froissart is inaccurate. Of course he is inaccurate. How could history passed, ballad fashion, from man to man be anything but inaccurate? And how could it

fail to possess that atmosphere and color which students are bidden to avoid, — lest perchance they resemble Tacitus, — but which lovers of "mere literature" hail rapturously, and which give to the printed page the breath of the living past? Froissart makes a sad jumble of his names, which, indeed, in that easy-going age, were spelt according to the taste and discretion of the writer; he embellishes his narrative with charming descriptions of incidents which perhaps never went through the formality of occurring; and he is good enough to forbear annoying us with dates. "About this time King Philip of France quitted Paris in company with the King of Bohemia;" or, "The feast of St. John the Baptist now approaching, the lords of England and Germany made preparations for their intended expedition." This is as near as we ever get to the precise period in which anything happened or did not happen, as the case may be; but to the unexacting reader names and dates are not matters of lively interest, and even the accuracy of a picturesque incident is of no paramount importance. If it were generally believed to have taken place, it illustrates the

customs and sentiments of the age as well as if it were authentic; and the one great advantage of the old over the new historian is that he feels the passions and prejudices of his own time, and reflects them without either condemnation or apology. The nineteenth-century mind working on fourteenth-century material is chilly in its analysis, and Draconian in its judgment. It can and does enlighten us on many significant points, but it is powerless to breathe into its pages that warm and vivid life which lies so far beyond our utmost powers of sympathy or comprehension.

Now, there are many excellent and very intelligent people to whom the fourteenth century or any other departed century is without intrinsic interest. Mr. John Morley has emphatically recorded his sentiments on the subject. "I do not in the least want to know what happened in the past," he says, "except as it enables me to see my way more clearly through what is happening now." Here is the utilitarian view concisely and comprehensively stated; and it would be difficult to say how Froissart, any more than Tacitus or Xenophon, can help us efficaciously to understand the

Monroe doctrine or the troubles in the Transvaal. Perhaps these authors yield their finest pleasures to another and less meritorious class of readers, who are well content to forget the vexations and humiliations of the present in the serener study of the mighty past. The best thing about our neighbor's trouble, says the old adage, is that it does not keep us awake at night; and the best thing about the endless troubles of other generations is that they do not in any way impair our peace of mind. It may be that they did not greatly vex the sturdier race who, five hundred years ago, gave themselves scant leisure for reflection. Certain it is that events which should have been considered calamitous are narrated by Froissart in such a cheerful fashion that it is difficult for us to preserve our mental balance, and not share in his unreasonable elation. "Now is the time come when we must speak of lances, swords, and coats of mail," he writes with joyous zest. And again he blithely describes the battle of Auray: "The French marched in such close order that one could not have thrown a tennis-ball among them but it must have stuck upon the point of a stiffly

carried lance. The English took great pleasure in looking at them." Of course the English did, and they took great pleasure in fighting with them half an hour later, and great pleasure in routing them before the day was past; for in this bloody contest fell Charles of Blois, the bravest soldier of his time, and the fate of Brittany was sealed. Invitations to battle were then politely given and cordially accepted, like invitations to a ball. The Earl of Salisbury, before Brest, sends word to Sir Bertrand du Guesclin: "We beg and entreat of you to advance, when you shall be fought with, without fail." And the French, in return, "could never form a wish for feats of arms but there were some English ready to gratify it."

This cheerful, accommodating spirit, this alacrity in playing the dangerous game of war, is difficult for us peace-loving creatures to understand; but we should remember the "desperate and gleeful fighting" of Nelson's day, and how that great sailor wasted his sympathy on the crew of the warship Culloden, which went ashore at the battle of the Nile, "while their more fortunate companions

were in the full tide of happiness." Du Guesclin or Sir John Chandos might have written that sentence, had either been much in the habit of writing anything,[1] and Froissart would have subscribed cordially to the sentiment. "Many persons will not readily believe what I am about to tell," he says with becoming gravity, "though it is strictly true. The English are fonder of war than of peace." "He had the courage of an Englishman," is the praise continually bestowed on some enterprising French knight; and when the English and Scotch met each other in battle, the French historian declares, "there was no check to their valor as long as their weapons endured." Nothing can be more vivacious than Froissart's description of the manner in which England awaited the threatened invasion of the French under their young king, Charles VI. — "The prelates, abbots, and rich citizens were panic-struck, but the artisans and poorer sort held it very cheap. Such knights and squires as were not rich, but eager for renown, were delighted, and said to each other: 'Lord! what fine times are coming, since the king of

[1] Du Guesclin never knew how to write.

France intends to visit us! He is a valiant sovereign, and of great enterprise. There has not been such a one in France these three hundred years. He will make his people good men-at-arms, and blessed may he be for thinking to invade us, for certainly we shall all be slain or grow rich. One thing or the other must happen to us.'"

Alas, for their disappointment, when adverse winds and endless altercations kept the invaders safe at home! There was a great deal of solid enjoyment lost on both sides, though wealthy citizens counted their gains in peace. War was not only a recognized business, but a recognized pleasure as well, and noble knights relieved their heavy fighting with the gentler diversions of the tournament and the chase. When Edward III. entered France for the last time, he carried with him thirty falconers laden with hawks, sixty couples of strong hounds, and as many greyhounds, "so that every day he had good sport, either by land or water. Many lords had their hawks and hounds as well as the king."

A merry life while the sun shone; and if it set early for most of these stout warriors, their

survivors had but little leisure to lament them. It is not easy to read Froissart's account of certain battles, serious enough in their results, without being strangely impressed by the boyish enthusiasm with which the combatants went to work; so that even now, five centuries later, our blood tingles with their pleasurable excitement. When France undertook to support the Earl of Flanders against Philip van Arteveld and the rebellious citizens of Ghent, the Flemish army entrenched themselves in a strong position on the river Lys, destroying all bridges save one, which was closely guarded. The French, in the dead of night, crossed the river in rickety little boats, a handful of men at a time, and only a mile or so distant from the spot where nine thousand of the enemy lay encamped. Apparently they regarded this hazardous feat as the gayest kind of a lark, crowding like schoolboys around the boats, and begging to be taken on board. "It was a pleasure to see with what eagerness they embarked," says the historian; and indeed, so great was the emulation, that only men of noble birth and tried valor were permitted to cross. Not a single varlet accom-

panied them. After infinite labor and danger, some twelve hundred knights — the flower of French chivalry — were transported to the other side of the river, where they spent the rest of a cold and stormy November night standing knee-deep in the marshes, clad in complete armor, and without food or fire. At this point the fun ceases to sound so exhilarating; but we are assured that "the great attention they paid to be in readiness kept up their spirits, and made them almost forget their situation." When morning came, these knights, by way of rest and breakfast, crossed the intervening country, fell upon the Flemish ranks, and routed them with great slaughter; for what could a mass of untrained artisans do against a small body of valiant and accomplished soldiers? A few days later, the decisive battle of Rosebecque ended the war. Van Arteveld was slain, and the cause of democracy, of "the ill intentioned," as Froissart for the most part designates the toiling population of towns, received its fatal blow.

Yet this courtly chronicler of battles and deeds of chivalry is not without a sense of justice and a noble compassion for the poor.

He disapproves of "commonalties" when they assert their claims too boisterously; he fails to detect any signs of sapience in a mob; and he speaks of "weavers, fullers, and other ill-intentioned people," as though craftsmen were necessarily rebellious, — which perhaps was true, and not altogether a matter for surprise. But the grievous taxes laid upon the French peasantry fill him with indignation; the distress of Ghent, though brought about, as he believes, by her own pride and presumption, touches him so deeply that he grows eloquent in her behalf; and he records with distinct approbation the occasional efforts made by both the French and the English kings to explain to their patient subjects what it was they were fighting about. Eloquent bishops, he tells us, were sent to preach "long and fine sermons," setting forth the justice of the respective claims. "In truth, it was but right that these sovereigns, *since they were determined on war*, should explain and make clear to their people the cause of the quarrel, that they might understand it, and have the better will to assist their lords and monarchs." Above all, he gives us a really charming and

cheerful picture of the French and English fishermen, who went quietly about their daily toil, and bore each other no ill will, although their countries were so hard at war. "They were never interrupted in their pursuits," he says, "nor did they attack each other; but, on the contrary, gave mutual assistance, and bought or sold, according as they had more fish or less than they required. For if they were to meddle in the national strife, there would be an end of fishing, and none would attempt it unless supported by men-at-arms." So perhaps there is one lesson of common sense and forbearance we may learn, even now, from those barbarous days of old.

As for the personal touches which give such curious vitality to Froissart's pages, they belong naturally to an unscientific age, when history, — or what passed as such, — biography, court gossip, and legendary lore were all mingled together, with no vexatious sifting of material. The chronicler tells us in ample detail every separate clause of an important treaty, and then breaks off to recount, at great length and with commendable gravity, the story of the Lord de Corasse and his familiar

demon, Orthon, who served him out of pure love, and visited him at night, to the vexation and terror of his lady wife. We hear in one chapter how the burghers of Ghent spoiled all the pleasure of the Lord d'Estournaz's Christmas by collecting and carrying away his rents, "which made him very melancholy," as well it might; and in the next we are told in splendid phrases of the death of Duke Wenceslaus of Bohemia, "who was, in his time, magnificent, blithe, prudent, amorous, and polite. God have mercy on his soul!" It is hard to see how anything could be better described, in fewer words, than the disastrous expedition of William of Hainault against the Frieslanders. "About the feast of St. Rémy, William, Earl of Hainault, collected a large body of men-at-arms, knights, and squires, from Hainault, Flanders, Brabant, Holland, Gueldres, and Juliers, and, embarking them on board a considerable fleet at Dordrecht, made sail for Friesland; for the Earl considered himself as lord thereof. If the Frieslanders had been people to listen to the legality and reasonableness of the claim, the Earl was entitled to it. But as they were

obstinate, he exerted himself to obtain it by force, and was slain, as well as a great many other knights and squires. God forgive them their sins!"

Surely that line about the unreasonable Frieslanders is worthy of Carlyle, — of Carlyle whose grim and pregnant humor lurks beneath sentences that, to the unwary, seem as innocent as the sheathed dagger before the blade is sprung. He it was who hated with a just and lively abhorrence all constitutional histories, and all philosophy of history, as likewise "empty invoice lists of Pitched Battles and Changes of Ministry," — as dead, he declared, as last year's almanacs, "to which species of composition they bear, in several points of view, no inconsiderable affinity." He it was, moreover, who welded together history and literature, and gave us their perfect and harmonious union in the story of the "Diamond Necklace." The past was enough for Carlyle, when he worked amid her faded parchments, and made them glow with renewed color and fire. That splendid pageant of events, that resistless torrent of life, that long roll-call of honored names which we term

comprehensively history, had for him a significance which needed neither moral nor maxim to confirm it. If we can believe with him that it is better to revere great men than to belittle them, better to worship blindly than to censure priggishly, better to enlarge our mental vision until it embraces the standards of other centuries than to narrow it in accordance with the latest humanitarian doctrine, — then we may stray safely through the storied past, until even Froissart, writing in a feudal chimney-corner strange tales of chivalry and carnage, will have for us a message of little practical service, but of infinite comfort in hours of idleness and relaxation. It is an engaging task to leave the present, so weighted with cumbersome enigmas and ineffectual activity, and to go back, step by step, to other days, when men saw life in simpler aspects, and moved forward unswervingly to the attainment of definite and obvious desires.

One voice has been recently raised with modest persistence in behalf of old-fashioned history, — history which may possibly be inaccurate here and there, but which gives to the present generation some vivid insight into

the lives of other generations which were not without importance in their day. Now that we are striving to educate every class of people, whether they respond to our advances or not, it is at least worth while to make their instruction as pleasant and as profitable as we can. Mr. Augustus Jessopp, whose knowledge of the agricultural classes is of that practical and intimate kind which comes of living with them for many years in sympathy and friendship, has a right to be heard when he speaks in their behalf. If they must be taught in scraps and at the discretion of committees, he believes that the Extension lecturers who go about dispensing "small doses of Ruskin and water, or weak dilutions of Mr. Addington Symonds," would be better employed in telling the people something of their own land and of their rude forefathers. And this history, he insists, should be local, full of detail, popular in character, and without base admixture of political science, so that the rustic mind may accustom itself to the thought of England, in all Christian ages, as a nation of real people; just as Tom Tulliver woke gradually, under the stimulating friction

of Maggie's questions, to the astonishing conviction that the Romans were once live men and women, who learned their mother tongue through some easier medium than the Latin grammar.

Again and again Mr. Jessopp has tried the experiment of lecturing on local antiquities and the dim traditions of ancient country parishes; and he has always found that these topics, which carried with them some homely and familiar flavor of the soil, awoke a deep and abiding interest in minds to which abstract ethics and technical knowledge appealed alike in vain. School boards may raise the cry for useful information, and fancy that a partial acquaintance with chlorides and phosphates is all that is necessary to make of a sulky yokel an intelligent agriculturist and a contented citizen; but a man must awaken before he can think, and think before he can work, and work before he can realize his position and meaning in the universe. And it needs a livelier voice than that of elementary chemistry to arouse him. "The Whigs," said Sir Walter Scott, "will live and die in the belief that the world is ruled by pamphlets

and speeches;" and a great many excellent people in every country will live and die in the belief that the world is ruled by printed books, full of proven and demonstrable truths. But we, the world's poor children, sick, tired, and fractious, know very well that we never learn unless we like our lesson, and never behave ourselves unless inspired by precept and example. The history of every nation is the heritage of its sons and daughters; and the story of its struggles, sufferings, misdeeds, and glorious atonements is the story that keeps alive in all our hearts that sentiment of patriotism, without which we are speeding swiftly on our path to national corruption and decay.

THE ROYAL ROAD OF FICTION.

"A TALE," says that charming scholar and critic, M. Jusserand, "is the first key to the heart of a child, the last utterance to penetrate the fastnesses of age." And what is true of the individual is true also of the race. The earliest voice listened to by the nations in their infancy was the voice of the story-teller. Whether he spoke in rude prose or in ruder rhyme, his was the eloquence which won a hearing everywhere. All through the young world's vigorous, ill-spent manhood it found time mid wars, and pestilence, and far migrations to cherish and cultivate the first wild art of fiction. We, in our chastened, wise, and melancholy middle age, find still our natural solace in this kind and joyous friend. And when mankind grows old, so old we shall have mastered all the knowledge we are seeking now, and shall have found ourselves as far from happiness as ever, I doubt not we shall be comforted in the twilight of

existence with the same cheerful and deceptive tales we hearkened to in childhood. Facts surround us from the cradle to the grave. Truth stares us coldly in the face, and checks our unmeaning gayety of heart. What wonder that we turn for pleasure and distraction to those charming dreams with which the story-teller, now grown to be a novelist, is ever ready to lure us away from everything that it is comfortable to forget.

And it was always thus. From the very beginning of civilization, and before civilization was well begun, the royal road of fiction ran straight to the hearts of men, and along it traveled the gay and prosperous spinners of wondrous tales which the world loved well to hear. When I was a little girl, studying literature in the hard and dry fashion then common in all schools, and which was not without its solid advantages after all, I was taught, first that "Pamela" was the earliest English novel; then that "Robinson Crusoe" was the earliest English novel; then that Lodge's "Rosalynde" was the earliest English novel. By the time I got that far back, I began to see for myself, what I dare say all

little girls are learning now, that the earliest English novel dates mistily from the earliest English history, and that there is no such thing as a firm starting-point for their uncertain feet to gain. Long, long before Lodge's "Rosalynde" led the way for Shakespeare's "Rosalind" to follow, romantic tales were held in such high esteem that people who were fortunate enough to possess them in manuscript — the art of printing not having yet cheapened such precious treasures — left them solemnly by will to their equally fortunate heirs. In 1315, Guy, Earl of Warwick, bequeathed to Bordesley Abbey in Warwickshire his entire library of thirty-nine volumes, which consisted almost exclusively, like the library of a modern young lady, of stories, such as the "Romaunce de Troies," and the "Romaunce d'Alisaundre." In 1426, Thomas, Duke of Exeter, left to his sister Joan a single book, perhaps the only one he possessed, and this too was a romance on that immortal knight and lover, Tristram.

Earlier even than Thomas of Exeter's day, the hardy barons of England had discovered that when they were "fested and fed," they

were ready to be amused, and that there was nothing so amusing as a story. In the twelfth century, before St. Thomas à Becket gave up his life in Canterbury cloisters, English knights and ladies had grown familiar with the tragic history of King Lear, the exploits of Jack the Giant Killer, the story of King Arthur and of the enchanter Merlin. The earliest of these tales came from Brittany, and were translated from Armorican into Latin by Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Benedictine monk, and a benefactor to the world; but, by the following century, Robin Hood, Tom-a-Lincoln, and a host of sturdy English-born heroes shared in the popular attention. It must have been inexpressibly helpful to the writers and compilers of early fiction that the uncritical age in which they lived had not yet been vitiated by the principles of realistic art. The modern maxims about sinning against the probabilities, and the novelist's bondage to truth, had not then been invented; and the man who told a story was free to tell it as he pleased. His readers or his hearers were seldom disposed to question his assertions. A knight did not go to the great and unnecessary

trouble of learning his letters in order to doubt what he read. Merlin was as real to him as Robin Hood. He believed Sir John Mandeville, when that accomplished traveler told him of a race of men who had eyes in the middle of their foreheads. It was a curious fact, but the unknown world was full of greater mysteries than this. He believed in Prester John, with his red and white lions, his giants and pigmies, his salamanders that built cocoons like silk-worms, his river of stones that rolled perpetually with a mighty reverberation into a sandy sea. Why, indeed, should these wonders be doubted; for in that thrice famous letter sent by Prester John to Manuel Comnenus, Emperor of Constantinople, did he not distinctly say, "No vice is tolerated in our land, and, with us, no one lies."

This broad-minded, liberal credulity made smooth the novelist's path. He always located his romances in far and unknown countries, where anything or everything might reasonably be expected to happen. Scythia, Parthia, Abyssinia, were favorite latitudes; Bohemia could always serve at a pinch; and Arcadia, that blessed haven of romance, remained for

centuries his happy hunting-ground, where shepherds piped, and nymphs danced sweetly in the shade, and brave knights met in glorious combat, and lovers dallied all day long under the whispering boughs. In Elizabeth's day, Arcadia had reached the zenith of its popularity. Robert Green had peopled its dewy fields with amorous swains, and Sir Philip Sidney had described its hills and dales in the four hundred and eighty folio pages of his imperishable romance. A golden land, it lies before us still, brilliant with sunshine that shall never fade. Knights and noble ladies ride through it on prancing steeds. Well-bred shepherds, deeply versed in love, sing charming songs, and extend open-hearted hospitality. Shepherdesses, chaste and fair, lead their snowy flocks by meadows and rippling streams. There is always plenty of fighting for the knights when they weary of plighting their vows, and noble palaces spring up for their entertainment when they have had enough of pastoral pleasures and sylvan fare. Ah, me! We who have passed by Arcadia, and dwell in the sad haunts of men, know well what we have lost. Yet was there not a day when the

inhabitants of the strange new world, a world not yet familiar with commercial depression and the stock exchange, were thus touchingly described in English verse?

> "Guiltless men who danced away their time,
> Fresh as their groves, and happy as their clime."

And what gayer irresponsibility could be found even in the fields of Arcadia?

"In Elizabeth's day," says M. Jusserand, "adventurous narratives were loved for adventure's sake. Probability was only a secondary consideration." Geographical knowledge being in its innocent infancy, people were curious about foreign countries, and decently grateful for information, true or false. When a wandering knight of romance "sailed to Bohemia," nobody saw any reason why he should not, and readers were merely anxious to know what happened to him when he got there. So great, indeed, was the demand for fiction in the reign of the virgin queen that writers actually succeeded in supporting themselves by this species of composition, a test equally applicable to-day; and it is worth while to remember that the prose tales of Nash, Green, and Sidney were translated into French more than a century

before that distinction was conferred on any play of Shakespeare's.

It need not be supposed, however, that Romance, in her triumphant progress through the land, met with no bitter and sustained hostility. From the very beginning she took the world by storm, and from the very beginning the godly denounced and reviled her. The jesters and gleemen and minstrels who relieved the insufferable ennui of our rude forefathers in those odd moments when they were neither fighting nor eating, were all branded as "Satan's children" by that relentless accuser, "Piers Plowman." In vain the simple story-spinners who narrated the exploits of Robin Hood and Tom-a-Lincoln claimed that their merry legends were "not altogether unprofitable, nor in any way hurtful, but very fitte to passe away the tediousness of the long winter evenings." It was not in this cheerful fashion that the "unco gude" — a race as old as humanity itself — considered the long winter evenings should be passed. Roger Ascham can find no word strong enough in which to condemn "certaine bookes of Chivalrie, the whole pleasure of whiche stand-

eth in two speciall poyntes, in open manslaughter and bolde bawdrye." The beautiful old stories, so simply and reverently handled by Sir Thomas Malory in the "Morte d'Arthur," were regarded with horror and aversion by this gentle ascetic; yet the lessons that they taught were mainly "curtosye, humanyte, friendlynesse, hardynesse and love." The valorous deeds of Guy of Warwick and Thomas of Reading lent cheer to many a hearth, and sent many a man with brave and joyous heart to battle; yet the saintly Stubbes, who loved not joyousness, lamented loudly that the unregenerate persisted in reading such "toys, fantasies and babbleries," in place of that more dolorous fiction, Fox's "Book of Martyrs." Even Sir Philip Sidney's innocent "Arcadia" was pronounced by Milton a "vain, amatorious" book; and the great poet who wrote "Comus" and "L' Allegro" harshly and bitterly censured King Charles because that unhappy monarch beguiled the sad hours of prison with its charming pages, and even, oh! crowning offense against Puritanism! copied for spiritual comfort, when condemned to die, the beautiful and reverent invocation of its

young heroine, Pamela. "The king hath, as it were, unhallowed and unchristened the very duty of prayer itself," wrote Milton mercilessly. "Who would have imagined so little fear in him of the true all-seeing deity, so little care of truth in his last words, or honor to himself or to his friends, as, immediately before his death, to pop into the hand of that grave bishop who attended him, for a special relique of his saintly exercises, a prayer stolen word by word from the mouth of a heathen woman praying to a heathen god."

But not even the mighty voice of Milton could check the resistless progress of romantic fiction. Not even dominant Puritanism could stamp it ruthlessly down. When "Pilgrim's Progress," the great pioneer of religious novels, was given to the world, England read it with devout delight; but she read too, with admirable inconsistency, those endless tales, those "romances de longue haleine," which crossed the channel from France, and replaced the less decorous Italian stories so popular in the preceding century. Some of these prolix and ponderous volumes, as relentless in dullness as in length, held their own stoutly for centuries,

and won allegiance where it seemed least due. There is an incredible story narrated of Racine, that, when a student at Port Royal, his favorite reading was an ancient prose epic entitled "Ethiopica; the history of Theagenes and Chariclea." This guileless work, being too bulky for concealment, was discovered by his director and promptly burned, notwithstanding its having been written by a bishop, which ought to have saved it from the flames. Racine, undaunted, procured another copy, and fearing it would meet with the same cruel fate, he actually committed large portions of it to memory, so that nothing should deprive him of his enjoyment. Yet "Ethiopica" would seem as absolutely unreadable a book as even a bishop ever wrote. The heroine, though chaste as she is beautiful, has so many lovers, all with equally unpronounceable names, and so many battles are fought in her behalf, that no other memory than Racine's could have made any sort of headway with them; while, just in the middle of the story, an old gentleman is suddenly introduced, who, without provocation, starts to work and tells all *his* life's adventures, two hundred pages long.

The real promoters and encouragers of romance, however, — the real promoters and encouragers of fiction in every age — were women, and this is more than enough to account for its continued triumphs. There was little use in the stubborn old Puritan, Powell, protesting against the idle folly of females who wasted their time over Sidney's "Arcadia," when they ought to have been studying the household recipe books. Long before Cromwell the mighty revolutionized England, women had wearied of recipes as steady reading, and had turned their wanton minds to matters more seductive. Wise and wary was the writer who kept these fair patronesses well in view. When John Lyly gave to the world his amazing "Euphues," he dexterously announced that it was written for the amusement and the edification of women, and that he asked for it no better fate than to be read by them in idle moments, when they were weary of playing with their lap-dogs. For a young man of twenty-five, Lyly showed an admirable knowledge of feminine inconsistency. By alternately flattering and upbraiding the subtle creatures he hoped to please, now sweetly

praising their incomparable perfections, now fiercely reviling their follies and their sins, he succeeded in making "Euphues" the best-read book in England, and he chained with affectations and foolish conceits the free and noble current of English speech.

It was the abundance of leisure enjoyed by women that gave the ten-volumed French romance its marvelous popularity; and one sympathizes a little with Mr. Pepys, though he was such a chronic grumbler, when he laments in his diary that Mrs. Pepys would not only read "Le Grand Cyrus" all night, but would talk about it all day, "though nothing to the purpose, nor in any good manner," remarks this censorious husband and critic. More melancholy still to contemplate is the early appearance on the scene of female novelists who wrote vicious twaddle for other women to read. We may fancy that this particular plague is a development of the nineteenth century; but twenty years before the virtuous Pamela saw the light, Eliza Heywood was doing her little best to demoralize the minds and manners of her countrywomen. Eliza Heywood was, in Mr. Gosse's opinion, — and

he is one of the few critics who has expressed *any* opinion on the subject, — the Ouida of her period. The very names of her heroines, Lassellia, Idalia, and Douxmoure, are Ouidesque, and their behavior would warrant their immediate presentation to that society which the authoress of "Strathmore" has so sympathetically portrayed. These "lovely Inconsiderates," though bad enough for a reformatory, are all as sensitive as nuns. They "sink fainting on a Bank" if they so much as receive letters from their lovers. Their "Limbs forget their Functions" on the most trifling provocation. "Stormy Passions" and "deadly Melancholy" succeed each other with monotonous vehemence in their "tortured Bosoms," and when they fly repentant to some remote Italian convent, whole cities mourn their loss.

Eliza Heywood's stories are probably as imbecile and as depraved as any fiction we possess to-day, but the women of England read them eagerly. They read too the iniquitous rubbish of Mrs. Aphra Behn; and no incident can better illustrate the tremendous change that swept over public sentiment with the introduction of good and decent novels than

the well-known tale of Sir Walter Scott's aunt, Mrs. Keith of Ravelston. This sprightly old lady took a fancy, when in her eightieth year, to re-read Mrs. Behn's books, and persuaded Sir Walter to send them to her. A hasty glance at them was more than enough, and back they came to Scott with an entreaty that he would put them in the fire. The ancient gentlewoman confessed herself unable to linger over pages which she had not been ashamed nor abashed to hear read aloud to large parties in her youth.

It must be remembered, however, that Aphra Behn, uncompromisingly bad though she was, wrote the first English didactic novel, "Oroonoka," the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of its day. It has the advantage of "Uncle Tom" in being a true tale, Mrs. Behn having seen the slave, Oroonoka, and his wife, Imoinda, in the West Indies, and having witnessed his tragic fate. It was written at the solicitation of Charles II., and was a popular anti-slavery novel, with certain points of resemblance to Mrs. Stowe's famous book; in the grace and beauty of its Africans, for example; in the strength and constancy of their affections, and

in the lavish nobility of their sentiments. Mrs. Behn knew as well as Mrs. Stowe that, if you want to produce a strong effect, you must not be too chary of your colors.

When the time came for the great flowering of English fiction, when Fielding and Richardson took England by storm, and France confessed herself beaten in the field ("Who would have thought," wrote the Marquis d'Argenson, "that the English would write novels, and better ones than ours?"), then it was that women asserted themselves distinctly as patronesses well worth the pleasing. To Smollett and Defoe they had never given whole-hearted approbation. Such robustly masculine writing was scarcely in their way. But Fielding, infinitely greater than these, met with no warmer favor at their hands. It is easy to account for the present unpopularity of "Tom Joneses" in decorous households by saying that modest women do not consider it fit for them to read. That covers the ground now to perfection. But the fact remains that, when "Tom Jones" was written, everybody *did* consider it fit to read. Why not, when all that it contained was seen about them day by

day? Its author, like every other great novelist, described life as he found it. Arcadia had passed away, and big libertine London offered a scant assortment of Arcadian virtues. Fielding had nothing to tell that might not have been heard any day at one of Sir Robert Walpole's dinner-parties. He had the merit — not too common now — of never confusing vice with virtue; though it must be confessed that, like Dumas and Scott and Thackeray, he took very kindly to his scamps; and we all know how angry a recent critic permits himself to be because Thackeray calls Rawdon Crawley "honest Rawdon." As far as can be seen, Fielding never realized the grossness of his books. He prefaced "Tom Jones" with a beautiful little sermon about "the solid inward comfort of mind which is the sure companion of innocence and virtue;" and he took immense credit to himself for having written "nothing prejudicial to the cause of religion and virtue, nothing inconsistent with the strictest rules of decency, nor which can offend even the chastest eye in the perusal." What more than this could be claimed by the authors of "The Old Homestead" and "Little Lord Fauntleroy"?

I do not for one moment believe that it was the blithe and brutal coarseness of Fielding's novels that exiled them from the female heart, that inconsistent heart which never fluttered over the more repellent indecency of "Pamela." Insidious influences were at work within the dovecotes. The eighteenth-century woman, while less given to self-analysis and self-assertion than her successor to-day, was just as conscious of her own nature, its resistless force, its inalienable laws, its permanent limitations; and in Richardson she recognized the artist who had divined her subtleties, and had given them form and color. His correspondence with women is unlike anything else the period has to show. To him they had an independence of thought and action which it took the rest of mankind a hundred years longer to concede; and it is not surprising to see the fervent homage this stout little tradesman of sixty received from his female flatterers, when we remember that he and he alone in all his century had looked into the rebellious secrets of their hearts with understanding and with reverence.

To any other man than Richardson, the

devout attentions of so many women would have been a trifle fatiguing. They wrote him letters as long as Clarissa Harlowe's. They poured out their sentiments on endless reams of paper. They told him how they walked up and down their rooms, shedding torrents of tears over his heroine's distress, unable to either go on with the book, or to put it resolutely down. They told him how, when "Clarissa" was being read aloud in a bedchamber, the maid who was curling her mistress's hair wept so bitterly she could not go on with her work, so was given a crown for her sensibility, and sent out of the room. They implored and entreated him to end his story happily; "a turn," wrote one fair enthusiast, "that will make your almost despairing readers mad with joy." Richardson purred complacently over these letters, like a sleek old cat, and he answered every one of them, instead of pitching them unread into the fire. Yet, nevertheless, true and great artist that he was, in spite of all his vanity, these passionate solicitations moved him not one hair's breadth from his path. "As well," says Mr. Birrell, "hope for a happy ending for King

Lear as for Clarissa Harlowe." She died, and England dissolved herself in tears, and gay, sentimental France lifted up her voice and wept aloud, and Germany joined in the sad chorus of lamentations, and even phlegmatic Holland was heard bewailing from afar the great tragedy of the literary world. This is no fancy statement. Men swore while women wept. Good Dr. Johnson hung his despondent head, and ribald Colley Cibber vowed with a great oath that this incomparable heroine should not die. Years afterwards, when Napoleon was first consul, an English gentleman named Lovelace was presented to him, whereupon the consul brightened visibly, and remarked, "Why, that is the name of Clarissa Harlowe's lover!" — an incident which won, and won deservedly for Bonaparte, the lifelong loyalty of Hazlitt.

Meanwhile Richardson, writing quietly away in his little summer-house, produced Sir Charles Grandison, a hero who is perhaps as famous for his priggishness as Lovelace is famous for his villainy. I think, myself, that poor Sir Charles has been unfairly handled. He is not half such a prig as Daniel De-

ronda; but he develops his priggishness with such ample detail through so many leisurely volumes. Richardson loved him, and tried hard to make his host of female readers love him too, which they did in a somewhat perfunctory and lukewarm fashion. Indeed, it should in justice be remembered that this eighteenth-century novelist intended all his books to be didactic. They seem now at times too painful, too detestable for endurance; but when "Pamela," with all its loathsome details, was published, it was actually commended from the pulpit, declared to be better than twenty sermons, and placed by the side of the Bible for its moral influence. Richardson himself tells us a curiously significant anecdote of his childhood. When he was a little boy, eleven years old, he heard his mother and some gossips complaining of a quarrelsome and acrimonious neighbor. He promptly wrote her a long letter of remonstrance, quoting freely from the scriptures to prove to her the evil of her ways. The woman, being naturally very angry, complained to his mother of his impertinence, whereupon she, with true maternal pride, commended his principles,

while gently censuring the liberty he had taken.

With Richardson's splendid triumph to spur them on, the passion of Englishwomen for novel-reading reached its height. Young girls, hitherto debarred from this diversion, began more and more to taste the forbidden sweets, and wise men, like Dr. Johnson, meekly acknowledged that there was no stopping them. When Frances Chamberlayne Sheridan told him that she never allowed her little daughter to read anything but the "Rambler," or matters equally instructive, he answered with all his customary candor: "Then, madam, you are a fool! Turn your daughter's wits loose in your library. If she be well inclined, she will choose only good food. If otherwise, all your precautions will amount to nothing." Both Charles Lamb and Ruskin cherished similar opinions, but the sentiment was more uncommon in Dr. Johnson's day, and we know how even he reproached good Hannah More for quoting from "Tom Jones."

With or without permission, however, the girls read gayly on. In Garrick's epilogue

to Colman's farce, "Polly Honeycombe," the wayward young heroine confesses her lively gratitude for all the dangerous knowledge she has gleaned from novels.

> "So much these dear instructors change and win us,
> Without their light we ne'er should know what 's in us.
> Here we at once supply our childish wants,
> Novels are hotbeds for your forward plants."

Later on, Sheridan gave us the immortal Lydia Languish feeding her sentimentality upon that "evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge," the circulating library. Lydia's taste in books is catholic, but not altogether free from reproach. "Fling 'Peregrine Pickle' under the toilet," she cries to Lucy, when surprised by a visit from Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony. "Throw 'Roderick Random' into the closet. Put 'The Innocent Adultery' into 'The Whole Duty of Man.' Thrust 'Lord Aimworth' under the sofa. Cram 'Ovid' behind the bolster. Put 'The Man of Feeling' into your pocket. There — now for them!"

How "The Man of Feeling" ever went into Lucy's pocket remains a mystery, for it takes many volumes to hold that discursive romance, where everything from character to clothes is

described with relentless minuteness. If a lady goes to a ball, we are not merely told that she looked radiant in "white and gold," or in "scarlet tulle," after the present slipshod fashion; but we are carefully informed that "a scarf of cerulean tint flew between her right shoulder and her left hip, being buttoned at each end by a row of rubies. A coronet of diamonds, through which there passed a white branch of the feathers of the ostrich, was inserted on the left decline of her lovely head." And so on, until the costume is complete.

By this time women had regularly enrolled themselves in the victorious army of novel-writers, and had won fame and fortune in the field. Consider the brilliant and instantaneous success of Frances Burney. Think of the excitement she aroused, and the honors heaped thick and fast upon her. A woman of twenty-six when she wrote "Evelina," she was able, by dint of short stature and childish ways, to pass for a girl of seventeen, which increased amazingly the popular interest in her novel. Sheridan swore he could not believe so young a thing could manifest such genius, and begged her to write him a comedy on the spot. Sir

Joshua Reynolds professed actual fear of such keen wit and relentless observation. Dr. Johnson vowed that Richardson had written nothing finer, and Fielding nothing so fine as "Evelina;" and playfully protested he was too proud to eat cold mutton for dinner when he sat by Miss Burney's side. Posterity, it is true, while preserving "Evelina" with great pride, has declined to place it by the side of "Tom Jones" or "Clarissa Harlowe;" but if we had our choice between the praise of posterity which was Miss Austen's portion, and the praise of contemporaries which was Miss Burney's lot, I doubt not we should be wise enough to take our applause off-hand, — "dashed in our faces, sounded in our ears," as Johnson said of Garrick, and leave the future to look after itself.

It is pleasant, however, to think that the first good woman novelist had her work over rather than under estimated. It is pleasant also to contemplate the really bewildering career of Maria Edgeworth. Miss Edgeworth's books are agreeable reading, and her children's stories are among the very best ever written; but it is not altogether easy to under-

stand why France and England contended to do her honor. When she went to London or to Paris she became the idol of brilliant and fashionable people. Peers and poets united in her praise. Like Mrs. Jarley, she was the delight of the nobility and gentry. The Duke of Wellington wrote verses to her. Lord Byron, whom she detested, extolled her generously. Moore pronounced her "delightful." Macaulay compared the return of the Absentee to the return of Ulysses in the "Odyssey." Sir Walter Scott took forcible possession of her, and carried her away to Abbotsford,—a too generous reward, it would seem, for all she ever did. Sydney Smith delighted in her. Mrs. Somerville, the learned, and Mrs. Fry, the benignant, sought her friendship; and finally, Mme. de Staël, who considered Jane Austen's novels "vulgar," protested that Miss Edgeworth was "worthy of enthusiasm."

Now this was all very charming, and very enjoyable; but with such rewards following thick and fast upon successful story-writing, it is hardly surprising that every year saw the band of literary aspirants increase and multiply amazingly. People were beginning to

learn how easy it was to write a book. Already Hannah More had bewailed the ever increasing number of novelists, "their unparalleled fecundity," and "the frightful facility of this species of composition." What would she think if she were living now, and could see over a thousand novels published every year in England? Already Mrs. Radcliffe had woven around English hearths the spell of her rather feeble terrors, and young and old shuddered and quaked in the subterranean corridors of castles amid the gloomy Apennines. Why a quiet, cheerful, retiring woman like Mrs. Radcliffe, who hated notoriety, and who loved country life, and afternoon drives, and all that was comfortable and commonplace, should have written "The Mysteries of Udolpho" passes our comprehension; but write it she did, and England received it with a mad delight she has never manifested for any triumph of modern realism. The volume, we are assured, was too often torn asunder by frantic members of a household so that it might pass from hand to hand more rapidly than if it held together.

Mrs. Radcliffe not only won fame and

amassed a considerable fortune, — she received five hundred pounds for "Udolpho" and eight hundred for "The Italian," — but she gave such impetus to the novel of horrors, which had been set going by Horace Walpole's "Castle of Otranto," that for years England was oppressed and excited by these dreadful literary nightmares. Matthew — otherwise "Monk" — Lewis, Robert Charles Maturin, and a host of feebler imitators, wrote grisly stories of ghosts, and murders, and nameless crimes, and supernatural visitations. Horrors are piled on horrors in these dismal and sulphurous tales. Blue fire envelops us, and persevering spectres, who have striven a hundred years for burial rites, sit by their victims' bedsides and recite dolorous verses, which is more than any self-respecting spectre ought to do. Compacts with Satan are as numerous as bargain counters in our city shops. Suicides alternate briskly with assassinations. In one melancholy story, the despairing heroine agrees to meet her lover in a lonely church, where they intend stabbing themselves sociably together. Unhappily, it rains hard all the afternoon, and — with an unexpected touch of real-

ism — she is miserably afraid the bad weather will keep her indoors. "The storm was so violent," we are told, "that Augusta often feared she could not go out at the appointed time. Frequently did she throw up the sash, and view with anxious looks the convulsed elements. At half past five the weather cleared, and Augusta felt a fearful joy."

It might have been supposed that the gay, good-humored satire of "Northanger Abbey" would have laughed these tragic absurdities from the land. But Miss Austen alone, of all the great novelists of England, won less than her due share of profit and renown. Her sisters in the field were loaded down with honors. When the excellent Mrs. Opie became a Friend, and refused to write any more fiction, except, indeed, those moral but unlikely tales about the awful consequences of lying, her contemporaries spoke gravely of the genius she had sacrificed at the shrine of religion. Charlotte Bronté's masterpiece gained instant recognition throughout the length and breadth of England. Of George Eliot's sustained success there is no need to speak. But Jane Austen, whose incomparable art is now the

theme of every critic's pen, was practically ignored while she lived, and perhaps never suspected, herself, how admirable, how perfect was her work. Sir Walter Scott, it is true, with the intuition of a great story-teller, instantly recognized this perfection; and so did Lord Holland and a few others, among whom let us always gladly remember George IV., who was wise enough to keep a set of Miss Austen's novels in every one of his houses, and who was happy enough to receive the dedication of "Emma." Nevertheless, it cannot be forgotten that fifteen years elapsed between the writing of "Pride and Prejudice" and its publication; that Cadell refused it unread, — a dreadful warning to publishers, — and that all Miss Austen ever realized from her books in her lifetime was seven hundred pounds, — one hundred pounds less than Mrs. Radcliffe received for a single story, and nearly two thousand pounds less than Frances Burney was paid for her absolutely unreadable "Camilla." High-priced novels are by no means a modern innovation, though we hear so much more about them now than formerly. Blackwood gave Lockhart one thousand pounds

for the manuscript of "Reginald Dalton," and "Woodstock" brought to Scott's creditors the fabulous sum of eight thousand pounds.

For with Sir Walter flowered the golden age of English fiction. Fortune and fame came smiling at his beck, and the great reading world confessed itself better and happier for his genius. Then it was that the bookshops were besieged by clamorous crowds when a new Waverly novel was promised to the public. Then Lord Holland sat up all night to finish "Old Mortality." Then the excitement over the Great Unknown reached fever heat, and the art of the novelist gained its absolute ascendency, an ascendency unbroken in our day, and likely to remain unbroken for many years to come. At present, every child that learns its letters makes one more story-reader in the world, and the chances are it will make one more story-writer to help deluge the world with fiction. Novels, it has been truly said, are the only things that can never be too dear or too cheap for the market. The beautiful and costly editions of Miss Austen and Scott and Thackeray compete for favor with marvelously cheap editions of

Dickens, that true and abiding idol of people who have no money to spend on hand-made paper and broad margins. It is the same with living novelists. Rare and limited editions for the rich; cheap and unlimited editions for the poor; all bought, all read, and the novelist waxing more proud and prosperous every day. So prosperous, indeed, so proud, he is getting too great a man to amuse us as of yore. He spins fewer stories now, and his glittering web has grown a trifle gray and dusty with the sweepings from back outlets and mean streets. He preaches occasionally in the market-place, and he says acrimonious things anent other novelists whose ways of thinking differ from his own. These new, sad fashions of speech are often very grievous to his readers, but nothing can rob him of our friendship; for always we hope that he will take us by the hand, and lead us smilingly away from the relentless realities of life to the golden regions of romance where the immortal are.

FROM THE READER'S STANDPOINT.

It is a serious age in which we live, and there is a painful sense of responsibility manifested by those who have assigned to themselves the task of directing their fellow creatures, not only in matters spiritual, but in all that pertains to intellectual or artistic life. That we need guidance is plain enough; the helping hand of patient and scholarly criticism was never more welcome than now; but to be driven, or rather hounded along the sunny paths of literature by severe and self-appointed teachers is not perhaps the surest way of reaching the best that has been known and thought in the world. Neither is it calculated to increase our enjoyment en route. The "personally conducted" reader must weary now and then of his restricted range, as well as of the peculiar contentiousness of his guides. If he be reading for his own entertainment, — and there are men and women who keep that object steadily and selfishly in view, — if he be

deep in a novel, for example, with no other purpose than an hour's unprofitable pleasure, it is annoying to be told by the authors of several other novels that he has chosen this pleasure unwisely. He may be pardoned if, in a moment of irritation, he tells the disputants plucking at his sleeve to please go on writing their fiction as well as in them lies, and he will decide for himself which of their books to read.

For it is not in the nature of man to relish a too strenuous dictatorship in matters which he cannot be made to believe are of very urgent importance. When Mr. Hamlin Garland says that American literature *must* be distinctly and unmistakably American, that it *must* be faithful to American conditions, it is difficult not to reply that there is no "must" for us of Mr. Garland's devising. Let him write his stories as he thinks best, and his many admirers will read them with satisfaction; but his authority is necessarily limited to his own literary offspring. He cannot expect to whip other people's children. When Mr. Hall Caine tells the good people of Edinburgh that the novelist is his brother's keeper, that it

is "evasive cowardice" for him to deny his responsibility, and that the mere fact of his having written a book proves that he feels himself something stronger than his neighbor who has n't, we only protest, as readers, against assuming any share in this spirit of acute conscientiousness. Personally, I do not believe that it is the duty of any man or woman to write a novel. In nine cases out of ten, there would be greater merit in leaving it unwritten. But even granting that the author goes to work, like Mr. Caine, from the strictest sense of moral liability, there can be no corresponding obligation on our part to read the tale. We hear too much of our failure to accept and appreciate the gifts which the liberal gods are now providing for us, and it would be more modest, as well as more dignified, if those who set the feast would forbear to extol its merits.

As for the rival schools of fiction, they may as well consent to live in amity side by side. If they don't "fill one home with glee," they fill many homes with that moderate gratification which lightens a weary hour. Each has its adherents; each gives its allotted share of

pleasure to people who know very well what they like, and who will never be converted by arguments into reading what they don't. It is useless to tell a man who is halfway through "The House of the Wolf," and oblivious for one blessed hour to everything in the world save the fate and fortunes of three French lads, that "the romantic novel represents a juvenile and, intellectually considered, lower stage of development than the realistic novel." He does n't care the value of a ha'-penny for stages of development. He is not reading "The House of the Wolf" by way of mental or moral discipline. He is not to be persuaded into exchanging it unfinished for "The Apprenticeship of Lemuel Barker," because more "creative intelligence" is required to tell a story without incident — when there is, so to speak, no story to tell. What is it to him, if the book were hard or easy to write? Why should he be reminded perpetually by realists and veritists of the arduous nature of their task? He did not put them to work. The one and only thing which is of vital interest to him is the tale itself. The author's point of view, his sense of personal responsi-

bility, the artistic limits which he sets himself, the difficulties which he piles in his own way and heroically overcomes, the particular platform from which he addresses the universe, his stern adherence to actualities, his truthful treatment of material, — all these things about which we hear so much, mean nothing, and less than nothing to the reader. Give him the book, and he asks to know no more. He judges it by some standard of his own, which may not bear the test of critical analysis, but which is more convincing to him than the recorded opinion of the writer. The wife of his bosom and his college-bred daughter are powerless to persuade him that Tourguéneff is a better novelist than Dickens. And when he stoutly resists this pressure from within, this subtle and penetrating influence of feminine culture, it is worse than useless to attack him from without with supercilious remarks anent juvenility, and the immature stage of his development.

It must be admitted that the realistic story-writers are more prone to tell us about themselves and their methods than are the heroic narrators of improbable, but none the less

interesting, romances. Mr. Rider Haggard, indeed, from time to time insinuates that he, too, is trammeled by the obstinate nature of facts, and that there is a restraining and troublesome ingredient of truth mingled with his fiction. But this is surely a pleasant jest on Mr. Haggard's part. We cannot believe that he ever denied himself an incident in the entire course of his literary life. Mr. Stevenson defended with characteristic spirit those keenly imaginative and adventurous tales which have made the whole world kin, and to whose splendid inspiration we owe perhaps the added heritage of "Kidnapped" and "Treasure Island." Mr. Lang throws down his gauntlet unhesitatingly in behalf of romance, and fights her battles with joyous and animating zeal. But Mr. Lang is not preeminently a novelist. He only drops into fiction now and then, as Mr. Wegg dropped into poetry, in the intervals of more urgent avocations. Moreover, it is seldom from these authors that we gather our minute information concerning the duties and difficulties of novel-writing. They have been too wary to betray the secrets of the craft. It is Mr. Garland,

for instance, and not Mr. Stanley Weyman, who confides to us what we had never even suspected, — the veritist's lack of control over the characters he has created. "He cannot shove them about," we are told, and are amazed to hear it, "nor marry them, nor kill them. What they do, they do by their own will, or through nature's arrangement. Their very names come by some singular attraction. The veritist cannot name his characters arbitrarily."

Small wonder he finds his task a hard one! Small wonder he says so much about the difficulties which beset him! He does his duty by Mary Jane, provides her with a lover, and laboriously strives to strew with novelistic thorns the devious paths of courtship. What must be his sentiments, when the ungrateful hussy refuses, after all his trouble, to marry the young man. Or perhaps she declines to be called Mary Ann, and insists that her name is Arabella, to his great annoyance and discomfiture. Lurid possibilities of revolt suggest themselves on every side, until the unhappy novel-writer, notwithstanding his detestation of the "feudal ideal," as illustrated

by Sir Walter Scott, must sigh occasionally for "*les Droits Seigneuriaux*," which would enable him to hang a few of his rebellious puppets, "*pour encourager les autres*." It may be worth while, in this connection, to remind him of the absolutely arbitrary manner in which Mr. Anthony Trollope, that true master of realism, disposed of Mrs. Proudie. If ever there was a character in fiction whom we should have trusted to hold her own against her author, Mrs. Proudie was that character. No reasonable creature will for a moment pretend that an amiable, easy-going, middle-aged gentleman like Mr. Trollope was a match for the Bishop's wife, who had, in her day, routed many a stronger man. She had lived so long, too. In novel after novel she had played her vigorous part, until the right to go on living was hers by force of established usage and custom. Yet this is what happened. One morning Mr. Trollope, while writing at the Athenæum Club, enjoyed the salutary experience of hearing himself criticised, and very unfavorably criticised, by two of the club members. Among other things, they said they were tired of reading about the same people over and over

again; they thought if a man had not wit enough to evolve new characters, he had better give up composing novels; and they objected especially to the perpetual domination of a woman so odious as Mrs. Proudie. At this juncture, Mr. Trollope could be silent no longer. He arose, confessed his identity, admitted his sin, and promised, by way of amendment, to kill Mrs. Proudie "before the week was out;" for were not the unfinished chapters of the "Last Chronicles of Barset" lying at that moment on his table? And what is more, he kept his word. He slew Mrs. Proudie, apparently quite oblivious to the fact that he was interfering unwarrantably with "nature's arrangement." I mention this incident to show that it is possible for a really determined author, who knows his rights and will have them, to overcome the resistance of the most obstinate character in his book.

For the rest, it does not appear to the peace-loving reader that either the realist or the romancist has any very convincing arguments to offer in defense of his own exclusive orthodoxy. When the romancist affirms that his books lift men out of the sordid, painful reali-

ties of life into a healthier atmosphere, and make them temporarily forgetful of sadness and discontent, the realist very sensibly replies that he prefers facts, however sordid, to literary anodynes, and that it is his peculiar pleasure to grapple with things as they are. When the realist remarks in turn that nothing is easier than to write of love and war, but that it "lacks distinction," and shows a puerile and childish mind, the romancist merely chuckles, and clasps "Les Trois Mousquetaires" closer to his heart. Neither of the combatants is likely to be much affected by anything the other has to say, and we, outside the ring, can but echo Marianne Dashwood's sentiment, "This is admiration of a very particular kind." Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Lang have both distinctly recorded their debt of gratitude to Dumas. They cannot and do not claim that he is at all times an edifying writer; but many a weary hour has been brightened for them by the magic of his art, many a fretful doubt laid to rest by contact with his virile gayety and courage. On the other hand, Mr. Boyesen has just as distinctly and just as sincerely assured us that Dumas had no charm nor spell

for him, and he has added his impression that it is only those who, intellectually, never outgrow their boyhood who continue to delight in such "sensational chronicles of impossible deeds."

It is in this latter statement, which has been repeated over and over again with as many variations as a popular air, that the peculiar temper of the realist stands revealed. He is not only sure that stories of adventure are not to his liking, but he is equally sure that those who do enjoy them are his intellectual inferiors, or at least that they have not reached a mental maturity commensurate with his own. He says so, with pleasing candor, whenever he has the opportunity. He is, in general, what the Ettrick Shepherd neatly terms "a bigot to his ain abeelities," and it would be hard to convince him that Dumas is none the less, in the words of Michelet, "a force of nature," because *he* is not personally stirred by that force, or because he knows a number of intelligent men who are no more affected than he is. For myself, I can but say that, being constrained once to spend two days in Marseilles, the only thing that reconciled me to my fate

was the sight of the gray Chateau d'If standing, stern and solitary, amid the roughened waters. "Banks and tariffs, the newspaper and the caucus," may, as Emerson says, "rest on the same foundations of wonder as the town of Troy and the Temple of Delphos;" but, personally, I am more susceptible to Troy, or even to the Chateau d'If, than I am to banks, of which useful institutions Marseilles contains a number, all very handsome and imposing. This is, perhaps, a matter of temperament and training, or it may be that mine is one of those "primitive natures" for whose "weak and childish imaginations," as Mr. Howells phrases it, such unrealities are a necessary stimulant. It is true that I might, if I chose, shelter myself under the generous mantle of Dr. Johnson, who was known to say that "the books we read with most pleasure are light compositions which contain a quick succession of events;" but, after all, this was but the expression of the doctor's personal preference, and of no more weight than are the words of living critics who share, or who do not share, in his opinion.

"A good cause," says Sir Thomas Browne, "needs not to be patron'd by passion, but can sustain itself upon a temperate dispute;" and if scornful words be unneeded — and unheeded — in matters of moment, they simply run to waste when poured out over trivialities. We are asked to take everything so seriously in this unhumorous age, to talk about the novel as a "powerful educational agent," and to discuss the "profound and complex logic of reality" in a short story of mild interest and modest wit. This confuses our sense of proportion, and we grow restive under a pressure too severe. Yet who shall say that the public, big, amiable, and unconcerned, is not grateful for every readable book that strays into its path? Romance and realism, the proven and the impossible, wild stories of youthful passion and sedate studies of middle-aged spinsters, tales of New England villages, tales of Western towns, tales of Scotch hamlets, and tales of the mist-lands beyond the mountains of Africa, are all welcomed and read with avidity. The novelist, unless he be inhumanly dull, is sure of his audience, and he grows di-

dactic from sheer excess of prosperity. When the Rev. Mr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) wrote "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush," the book went straight to many hearths and many hearts. It was not an epoch-making work by any means, but its homely pathos and humor insured for it an immediate hearing, and most comfortable returns. The critics united in its praise, and the publishers gave us at once to understand how many copies had been sold. Why, then, did Mr. Watson, to whom the gods had been so kind, lift up his voice in a few short months to say supercilious things anent all schools of fiction save his own? The world is wider than Scotland, and local coloring is not humanity's one need. It will be long ere we believe that the art of story-telling began with "A Window in Thrums," or that "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush" marks its final development. Let us rather remember with gratitude that Mr. Barrie, an artist too versatile to be intolerant, has recorded, in place of delicate self-analysis and self-congratulation, his sincere reverence for Scott, and Dickens, and Thackeray, and Fielding, and Smollett, "old-fash-

ioned novelists of some repute," whose horizon is wide as the sound of our English tongue, and whose sun is not yet set.

If we cannot have peace, let us then have a truce, as in the old fighting days, a truce of six months or a year. It would freshen us amazingly to hear nothing for a whole year about the "soul-searching veracity of Tolstoï," and a great many timid people might pluck up heart to read that fine novelist, who has been rendered so alarming by his admirers. For a year the romancist could write of young people who marry, and the realist of middle-aged people who don't; and, in the renewed tranquillity of content, each workman might perhaps recognize the strength of the other's position. For youth, and age, and marriage, and celibacy are alike familiar to us all. We have no crying need to be enlightened on these subjects, though we cheerfully consent to be entertained by them. "If the public do not know what books to read," says Mr. Lang very truthfully, "it is not for lack of cheap and copious instruction." We are sated sometimes with good advice, and grow a little tired

of education. There are days even when we recall with mingled regret and gratitude the gray-haired, unknown author of "Aucassin and Nicolette," who wove his tale in the humble hope that it might for a brief moment gladden the sad hearts of men.

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